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'I can't recall a single thing Hague has ever said or done that is of interest'

George Walden's poison pen
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30p

EVERY WEEKDAY

- Bombs are blamed on far Right
- Jews fear they may be next target

Police say racists will strike again

By STEWART TENDLER,
RICHARD FORD
AND JOANNA BALE

POLICE fear the neo-Nazi racists who planted nail bombs in Brixton and Brick Lane in London will strike again in other cities, and possibly against Jewish targets.

As Scotland Yard drafted extra detectives into the anti-terrorist branch yesterday and stepped up the hunt for the bombers, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said there was a constant danger until the "extremely evil, unpleasant" criminals and terrorists were caught.

The hunt for the bombers is Scotland Yard's top priority. Senior officers are well aware that their success will be closely monitored by ethnic communities in the wake of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry.

Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, yesterday condemned the attack in Brick Lane on Saturday evening as "an appalling outrage" and an attack on "innocent people in innocent communities". The police now had no doubt that the two attacks were racist, Sir Paul said. "We feared the Brixton bomb would be repeated and, tragically, it has been. We have had very serious fears there will be a continuing series of vicious attacks and we cannot rule out these attacks might be taken outside London."

As Sir Paul spoke, Yard officers were briefing other forces. A national meeting of chief constables on Wednesday will be told the latest developments in the investigations.

Outside London, there are potential targets in Slough, Luton, Birmingham, Leicester, Manchester, Bradford, Bristol, Nottingham, Leeds, the Lancashire mill towns and Glasgow. The Yard has also had talks in the last week with senior officials of the Jewish community. Michael Whine, from the British Board of Jewish Deputies, said yesterday that it was logical to think that Jews could be the next target.

In Saturday evening's at-

ON OTHER PAGES



■ "There was a terribly loud bang and I saw this red car jump four feet in the air as its boot exploded." — victim describes the horror of Saturday's bombing in Brick Lane.

■ Brick Lane has long been a violent fault line between refugee immigrants and a hostile indigenous population. The first of the waves of immigrants were Huguenots fleeing from France after Louis XIV made Protestantism illegal in 1685. Jews escaping the pogroms of Russia and Poland arrived between 1880 and 1905.

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tack, a nail bomb hidden inside a sports bag was left on the pavement in Hanbury Street, off Brick Lane, the centre of the biggest expatriate Bangladeshi community in the world. Police said the bomb appeared to be identical in make-up to the Brixton device.

It was found by a white man in his fifties in Hanbury Street, which is lined with shops and restaurants. He picked up the bag at about 17.37, walked round to Brick Lane and put it in the boot of his car. He looked at the contents and then closed the boot. According to police, he then became worried at what he might have found. He crossed the road to a small, part-time

police station. It was closed. He decided not to move the car and walked to a former police station in Leman Street, which is now used as offices.

He tried to telephone police but as he did so, at 17.57, the bomb exploded. Six-inch nails were hurled 40 yards down the street, smashing shop windows. Six Asian people were injured slightly. An anti-terrorist officer said yesterday that putting the bomb in the car had not reduced the power of the blast. The greater energy built up probably threw the nails further down the street.

The bombing came at the end of a week in which a number of ethnic community groups received warnings, purporting to come from extremist groups, threatening that Brick Lane and other areas were to be attacked. Police patrols were increased, but Sir Paul said the network of streets in Spitalfields was difficult to monitor.

Two hours after the blast, a caller claimed that Combat 18, the most violent of the right-wing groups, had planted the bomb. The call was made in a terse 999 call from a telephone box in New Malden, south-west London.

Police say there has been an increase in threats from extremist groups since the report on the Stephen Lawrence case in February. The last week has also seen anniversaries of Hitler's birthday, St George's Day and the attack on Stephen.

The Southall Monitoring Project, in West London, said yesterday that it had received a handwritten letter from Combat 18 two days after the Brixton bomb, saying that there would be other attacks. The letter, which had a Hampshire postmark, gave warning of further attacks and named Southall, Slough, Tower Hamlets and Tottenham in London, Bradford and Dublin. The areas all have high concentrations of Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and black people. The letter suggested Dublin would be attacked because the group hated Roman Catholics.



Land of his future: a refugee boy leads a column of ethnic Albanians who landed at Leeds from Skopje yesterday. The first batch, mainly women and children, were happy to leave Macedonian camps but worried about the families they left behind

Bewildered refugees find their haven in Britain

By PAUL WILKINSON AT LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT
AND STEPHEN FARREL IN SKOPJE

A SMALL boy stepped hesitantly off a set of aircraft steps yesterday to become the first Kosovan from the Balkan refugee camps to arrive on British soil.

The unfamiliar airport on the edge of Leeds and the ranks of waiting pressmen were all a little too much for Alben Maksuti, 4, and he needed a guiding hand from a member of the ground staff to steer him towards an airport bus and a future which nobody can yet predict.

Behind him came his mother, followed by a straggling column of bewildered refugees from the Macedonian camp at Stenkovik.

One was Avni Gosalci, 27, who fled with his wife Anita, 25, and their baby daughter Dilella, two months old. He was relieved to be in Britain but concerned for the family he had left behind. "We are very grateful for everything this country has done," he said. Even in the camps, the British were sensitive and helpful.

The chemistry student from Pristina told how his family was given two minutes to leave their home by Serb police threatening them with knives, and said that he was allowed to escape only because of his daughter.

"I held the baby in my arms. Without the baby it would have been very difficult if not impossible to be allowed to cross the border. Because we had a baby we were lucky. Again we are very grateful to the baby for saving our lives."

Of the 161 on the three-hour flight from Skopje, 70 were

children, eight of them aged under two. One, a schoolboy suffering from multiple sclerosis, was taken from the aircraft in his wheelchair aboard a specially adapted hoist. Most of the rest were women. Such was the confused state of events that officials in Leeds had no exact picture of who was aboard the Tupolev 154 jet until it had touched down.

The refugees' long day began when they boarded buses at the giant Brazeale and Stenkovik camps after a last-minute medical check from doctors wearing masks. They climbed aboard four vehicles amid smiles, waves and tears and were driven to the airport, arriving at 10am and loading bags, suitcases and bin liners onto waiting trolleys.

The mood on board the buses was decidedly mixed. Some families delighted to be leaving with everyone on board, others distraught at leaving behind sisters, cousins and friends. One boy, Visar, clutched a toy rabbit named Lepurosh, the Albanian for Bunny, as he trotted happily into the airport.

By contrast Fexherije Shala, 31, and her two sisters-in-law, Tebare and Behare, were reduced to tears as they were forced to leave behind Fexherije's sister Adilje. Unlike them, her name had not made it onto the reserve list.

They are here in England, but in their heads they are still in Kosovo," said Julia Purcell. Continued on page 10, col 3

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Dashing Clinton fumbles America's nuclear football

A NEW and wholly unexpected threat to world security cropped up briefly during the weekend's Nato summit when President Clinton dashed off from a meeting and forgot to take with him the "nuclear football", a briefcase containing secret electronic launch codes for US nuclear missiles.

The football, a communications link with the Pentagon authorising the use of nuclear weapons, is carried by (and chained to) a military aide who is supposed to remain just feet from the President whenever he leaves the White House. But on Saturday Mr Clinton ended his International Trade Centre meeting and sped off in his motorcade, leaving behind the most dangerous handbag in the world.

The aide marched the half-mile to the White House, thankfully without being mugged, and reunited the President with his portable "button". "We're safe," Joe Lockhart, the White House spokesman, said. He added that the

Ben Macintyre
in Washington
on the day the
President forgot
Armageddon

meeting had ended 45 minutes ahead of schedule, and "rather than wait for everyone to gather, he just took off".

The black attack case has been known as the "football" and passed with care from one president to the next since Eisenhower's day. The device, containing a telephone, two pull-up antennae and codes to identify the caller, would give the President a range of options in responding to a nuclear alert. The President also carries a card containing identification codes to launch a nuclear strike.

Mr Clinton is not the first

president to fumble the football. In 1975 Gerald Ford arrived at an economic summit in Paris and discovered, with horror, that it had been left in a luggage compartment on Air Force One. "It was one of those things: Didn't you bring the football? No, I thought you had the football," Ron Nessen, the embarrassed White House press secretary, explained.

Jimmy Carter left the code-card in his suit when it was sent to the dry-cleaners, and Ronald Reagan was separated from it when shot by John Hinckley in 1981. Later it was discovered that the FBI had seized it as evidence.

Mr Clinton's Russian counterpart is accompanied by an aide carrying a "cheget", although there are rumours that it may be simply symbolic. According to a 1996 CIA report, Mr Yeltsin's first defence minister was asked whether he and the President could "push the button" for a nuclear attack. "Yes," came the answer. "But nothing would happen."



Viewers who do not want to be turned away now...

Former IOC chief dies

Lord Killanin, the former IOC President, died at his home in Dublin yesterday. He was 84. He is survived by his wife, three sons and a daughter.

Lord Killanin began to break down the rigid inflexibility of the Olympic committee during his eight-year reign as President from 1972.

Meldrew is resurrected

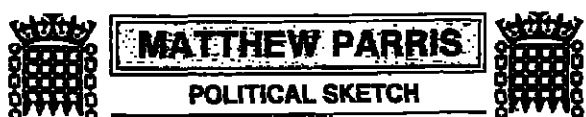
BBC Television is resurrecting *One Foot in the Grave* after recent new sitcoms proved disappointing. *One Foot in the Grave*, starring Richard Wilson as Victor Meldrew, attracted audiences of 16 million and repeats have been achieving 10 million viewers. The new series was announced yesterday at the Montreux Television Festival.

Mark Goldberg, owner of Crystal Palace football club, has lost more than £7 million in business ventures in addition to the £22 million he invested in the Nationwide First Division club.

Greg Dyke's financial contributions to the Labour Party disqualify him from being a serious candidate for the job of Director-General of the BBC, Paul Fox, a former Controller of BBC1 and Managing Director of BBC Television, argues in a letter to the Editor today.

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Ming leads way as LibDems bang their drum

THREE-BUTTON blue blazer, suede slippers, Saturday shirt, silk tie... and a certain bearing. These are the attire of a parliamentary prince in his patch.

Not that Menzies Campbell lords it. In the way that an educated Scot of a certain class can, the Liberal Democrat MP for North East Fife succeeds effortlessly in being of the people, for the people and above the people, all at the same time. And in prosperous Fife, the combination of looking like a Tory and not being one is irresistible. It would be inappropriate for Ming (as Scots pronounce the abbreviated Menzies) to act as though he were anybody special, but even around him will. The yellow banner they've draped across the shopfront of his HQ in Cupar says "Menzies Campbell QC, CBE, ROM".

His party's Leader is shortly to retire, and there have been discreet murmurs that, if pressed — if friends are determined, his name should go forward — well... Ming would not wish to shirk. But that's for another day. Today the campaign is for the local LibDem candidate in the Scottish Parliamentary elections, Iain Smith.

And nobody marshals a campaign better than Ming. We gather in his cramped office. The splendid Elspeth ("Mrs Campbell") has never sounded right upstairs *The Times*. "You are wicked to seek us out like this." Her husband explains the purpose of a Liberal Democrat walkabout: "Little talking. Pace. Don't tarry. We want people to say, 'Lord — the ruddy streets full of Liberal Democrats'. Smile; big handshake; introduce Iain; move on. If anyone seems unwilling — no argument, polite smile and move on. Now, big smiles everybody: cheerful, happy... and we're off!"

He does it brilliantly. "Keep up! Cross the road... now." Small boys on bikes decide we are a cavalcade, and join. Ladies with sticks

Leadership fight, page 12

Hague unruffled by split with Old Guard

By Philip Webster
POLITICAL EDITOR

WILLIAM HAGUE delivered a "like it, or lump it" message to his Tory critics last night as he prepared to take the break with his party's Thatcherite past a stage further.

Mr Hague declared that if colleagues' feathers had been ruffled over his rejection of health and education privatisation, they would have to "get unruffled because that is the way I am going to carry on".

Having authorised Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, to make plain today that the Tories would match Labour increases in spending on health and education, the Tory leader was going out of his way to stress that he would not be deflected by the fierce reaction in the Tory press and among Thatcherite members of the Shadow Cabinet against his tactics.

That was underlined again yesterday when Michael Howard, who led the internal criticism last week of the speech by Peter Lilley ruling out big private sector solutions for health and education, made his own irritation publicly obvious. When it was put to him on BBC TV's *Breakfast* with Frost that he was furious about the whole episode, Mr



William Hague, left, is keen to distance himself from the policies of Thatcherites such as Michael Howard



Howard did not demur but added to Sir David Frost: "Peter Lilley made a speech. If you want Peter to talk about his speech I am sure he would be delighted to come on to your programme."

Another member of the Shadow Cabinet denounced the Lilley-Hague strategy as "crazy — how can we ever promise to cut taxes again?"

But sources close to Mr Hague pointed to Mr Maude's intervention today — "After Hague he is the most important man in the Tory Party" — as an indication that the leadership was in tune with changing times. Other Tory sources

said it helped Mr Hague that the Old Guard and Thatcherite elements of the press were against him.

"His mission is to change the party. That is bound to give him trouble from those who believe their achievements are being slighted."

Confirming Tory support for the Government's planned spending totals on health and education, Mr Maude said: "In government we sometimes sounded as if we were only interested in markets and accountancy. But someone suffering from cancer is a patient who wants to be cared for, not a customer within the internal

market... So I want to make this absolutely clear, without ambiguity, without scope for distortion. In opposition we will support and in government we will implement the increases in health and education spending announced by Gordon Brown."

Mr Hague said on Radio 5 Live's *Sunday Breakfast* programme: "What we got clear this week and what we will go on getting clear is that the Conservative Party believes in strong public services. I feel very strongly about this. I went to a comprehensive school myself. I use the National Health Service myself."

"I am not going to have my party caricatured any longer as a party that wants to destroy these things. We are going to get that straight and keep that straight."

"Of course it ruffles a few feathers if you do that. But they will have to get unruffled because that is the way I am going to carry on."

Alan Milburn, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, seized on the move.

He said: "The Tories are all over the place. They describe Labour's spending plans as 'reckless' then they say they agree with them. They say they want more private health care, then they say they're against privatising the NHS."

Walden takes party to task

Former minister condemned Major as 'pathetic', writes Philip Webster

WILLIAM HAGUE has "something of the nerd about him," Kenneth Clarke's forte is "not giving a sod, and being a lazy sod somehow increases the attraction."

The more John Redwood tries to behave like a normal person "the madder he looks." Michael Portillo's immaturity "stems from his obsession with his name and appearance." John Major: "I could never convince myself he was a real person."

These and a host of other unflattering observations about the politicians who made up the last Conservative Cabinet are made today by George Walden, the former Tory minister, in his book which is being serialised in *The Times*.

Mr Walden, who stood down at the last election, deliv-

ers biting, sometimes insulting, judgments on the men who failed to win a fifth successive Tory term.

But the book also contains some fresh insights into the Tory slide towards disaster in 1997 and the state of mind of the man who led them.

He discloses that 30 minutes before the crucial vote on the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 a depressed John Major called him into his office to try to persuade him to back the Government rather than abstain as he had during the passage of the legislation.

The Government looked to be on the point of defeat, a re-

verse which could well have resulted in Mr Major's fall. The Prime Minister stunned Mr Walden by suddenly saying "I didn't ask for this job."

Mr Walden writes: "His remark was pathetic. But the pithos worked." He backed the Government which, with other ministers employing similar persuasive techniques, managed to win by three votes. He writes that he did not recall Mr Major thanking him. "Perhaps the man who had told me that he hadn't asked to be prime minister didn't really want to win."

However, it will be Mr Walden's verdicts on the men still

leading today's Tory party that will give most ammunition to its critics. He says of Mr Hague: "In all the years we were in Parliament together, I can't recall a single thing he has ever said or done that is of interest. When I think of William Hague, nothing occurs to me."

He says whenever he talked to Mr Hague to ask his opinion he either smiled or giggled. "I am told it was the same when he was in Cabinet, though there it was more smiles than giggles... He has all Major's niceness and decency, in corporate form, and there seems no harm in him, because where there is no personality there can be no harm."

Memoirs, pages 16 and 17

NEWS IN BRIEF

Sinn Fein gives warning of a summer of violence

SINN FEIN stepped up its pressure on the Government yesterday with a warning that members of Northern Ireland's assembly could be killed in a summer of violence if the Good Friday peace accord was not swiftly implemented (writes Martin Fletcher).

The peace process was already in "very deep crisis", said Mitchell McLaughlin,

the party chairman. If the government "parked" the accord because of the decommissioning dispute, "there will be nothing to come back to. We know what the loyalists are going to do this marching season."

He added: "There could be members of this assembly dead by the time this summer is over."

BSE inquiry to cost £25m

The public inquiry into BSE looks set to cost as much as £25 million and is now unlikely to report to ministers before the spring next year (Valerie Elliott writes). This is the second time the inquiry team has missed its deadline and senior ministers are so unhappy with the length of time and extra costs that the final timespan for the work has not yet been agreed. The Prime Minister was expected to have formally announced a new deadline for the inquiry after Easter. The inquiry team defend their work and insist they are trying to ensure "fairness" to every witness.

Wrinkly idols push pensions



CAMPAIGNERS from Age Concern are trying to shock young people into planning for their retirements by showing what their pop idols would look like in old age.

Using computer graphics, the charity has produced pictures of five pop stars, including the Spice Girls, as they would look in old age.

Age Concern is responding to a survey which shows 49 per cent of those between 16 and 24 think they should start planning for retirement early when they are over 35.

"That's far too late," said Sally Green, who chairs the Friends of the Age Concern, who are planning an ageing population.

Royal Parks 'facing decay'

The country's Royal Parks are under threat from too many cars, too many dogs, too much litter and too many people. The Royal Parks Agency is demanding more government funding and finding to tackle growing levels of decay and deterioration — from rotting railings and buildings to unsightly paths and landscaping.

They claim that some of funding solutions, including big pop concerts, put the parks at risk. A Royal Parks Agency spokesman said the parks needed to pay their way.

Woody off the

Dispersed cocaine al



Goose guard to protect priz

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Woody and Soon-Yi show off their mystery child

Neurotic film star's lack of parenting skills put to test, writes James Bone

WOODY Allen and his young bride, Soon-Yi Prewin, played the proud parents at the weekend when they paraded their new baby girl up New York's fashionable Madison Avenue in a pram.

The neurotic actor, who was once reprimanded by a judge for lacking "any parenting skills", told a pursuing photographer: "Yes, it's our baby."

The controversial couple, who have a 35-year age difference, said they had named the child Bechet. Dumaine Allen — thought to be a tribute to Sidney Bechet, the late, great jazz clarinetist, and Jean Dumaine, the director's long-time confidant and producer.

Mr Allen, 63, refused to reveal how old the infant was beyond saying she was "a few months". The child appeared to have Asian features, like her Korean-born mother, but Soon-Yi Prewin, 28, has not looked pregnant in recent public appearances and there was speculation that the baby, like her mother, was adopted.



Bechet, left, product of Woody Allen's new relationship and earlier, during his marriage to Mia Farrow



Still in swaddling clothes, Bechet becomes the latest player in a family drama that makes even Mr Allen's tortured comedies look tame.

The scandal broke back in 1992 when Mr Allen's long-time companion, Mia Farrow, found nude photographs of Soon-Yi, then a 21-year-old college student, on the mantelpiece of his flat on Fifth Avenue. In her autobiography, *What Falls Away*, the actress recalls how she confronted Mr Allen, screaming: "You're meant to do the right thing. You're not supposed to f--- the kids."

Ms Farrow, star of *Rosemary's Baby*, had adopted Soon-Yi in 1977 on a trip to Korea with her second husband, the conductor Andre Previn. The two divorced in 1979 and

Ms Farrow began dating Mr Allen in 1980.

One of seven children of the Australian film director John Farrow and the Irish actress Maureen O'Sullivan, Ms Farrow has herself been described by Mr Allen as a "thrill mom". She now has a total of ten adopted children and four biological offspring.

During their 13-year relationship, Ms Farrow and Mr Allen adopted a son, Moses, and a daughter, Dylan, and had a natural son named Satchel.

Although he has known Soon-Yi since she was eight, Mr Allen insists that he never played the father-figure to his future bride because he and Ms Farrow never married and always lived apart on opposite sides of Central Park.

The discovery of the affair so shocked Ms Farrow that she launched a bitter battle for custody of Dylan, Moses and Satchel, and publicly accused Mr Allen of molesting their adopted daughter, then aged seven.

Although the director was never prosecuted for child abuse, he was barred from seeing his children without a monitor in the room and is now reportedly estranged from all three.

Mr Allen and Soon-Yi eloped to Venice, where they were married in a ceremony in the town hall. In what was seen as an effort to restore his reputation, Mr Allen, who plays clarinet when he is not writing, directing or acting in his films, allowed Barbara Kopple, the Oscar-winning

documentary maker, to follow him and Soon-Yi as they toured Europe with his jazz band. In the documentary, *Wild Man Blues*, Mr Allen and his bride are seen canoeing in a gondola, swimming in a hotel pool, sharing breakfast in their bathrobes and even lying in bed together. At one point, the girlish Soon-Yi teases her older husband for being a "nerd".

Hundreds of props and costumes from a decade of Woody Allen films went under the auctioneer's hammer in a New York warehouse on Saturday. The 432 lots of movie history boxes of "realistic rotting skulls" from the film *Shadows and Fog* and a pair of gold-and-red sofas used in *Crimes and Misdemeanours* and *Bullets Over Broadway*.



Speculation is rife that the baby paraded by Woody Allen and Soon-Yi is adopted

DJ suspended over cocaine allegations

By MICHAEL PATERSON

JOHNNIE WALKER, the Radio 2 DJ, has been suspended from his job after allegations that he took cocaine and offered to supply prostitutes.

The 55-year-old, who hosts the weekday drivetime show and a Saturday afternoon show, is alleged to have snorted cocaine in a hotel in London and arranged prostitutes for undercover reporters from the *News of the World*.

It is claimed that he was trapped on a hidden video camera snorting cocaine through a rolled-up bank note and is facing a possible police investigation.

A BBC spokesman said yesterday: "Johnnie Walker has been suspended from his Radio 2 show pending a full BBC investigation to be led by Jenny Abramsky, the BBC's director of radio."

Walker, who was born Peter Dingley and grew up in Solihull, was one of the early DJs on Radio 1, which he joined from the pirate station Radio Caroline. But he has had a stormy relationship with the Corporation.

He left the station in 1976 after seven years because of a disagreement over what records should be played. This followed an outburst on air when



Walker: an investigation by head of BBC Radio

he described the Bay City Rollers, then Britain's most popular group, as playing "musical garbage".

After a short-lived spell at a radio station in San Francisco, he returned to Britain and had a year unemployed before starting back in local radio. He returned to Radio 1 in 1987.

The twice-divorced father-of-two, one of many DJs to have been dubbed the "housewives' favourite", was recruited by Radio 2 in recent years because it was eager to appeal to a younger audience.

A spokesman for the Metropolitan Police said: "If any-

thing of this sort is brought to our attention we will investigate accordingly. We will look at the evidence if it's appropriate."

Walker became a second-hand car salesman in Birmingham and began to moonlight as a DJ in local venues.

He soon entered the world of pirate radio stations, with jobs on *Radio England* and more famously *Radio Caroline*, which broadcast round-the-clock from a ship off the coast of Essex and became outlawed under the Marine Offences Bill on August 14, 1967.

During his first spell with Radio 1 he established a reputation as a DJ for whom the records he played were more important than the chat in between and he championed new names like Steve Harley, Lou Reed, Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles.

His outspoken views and insistence that he should play album tracks and not just records on the "playlist" led him to resign from the BBC in 1976. He headed for the United States and joined local radio station K-San. He returned to England in the early 1980s and completed stints at local radio stations Radio West and Wiltshire Radio. In April 1998, he returned to the BBC, this time joining Radio 2.



Gardener Sally Moon tends the £10,000 orchid grown by McBean's, of East Sussex

Goose guard put on alert to protect prize red orchid

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

A RED ORCHID is being guarded around the clock by security guards, dogs and a gaggle of geese.

The moth orchid (novely *phalaenopsis*), said to be the finest example of its colour grown in the world, is estimated to be worth more than £10,000. Orchids usually sell for no more than £20 each.

McBean's Orchids are so worried that the flower could be stolen they have posted territorial guards (along with other security) around the 120-year-old nursery. The geese would flap and cackle loudly if anyone went near the greenhouse where it is being kept.

The flower has been given

an Award of Merit by the Royal Horticultural Society's Orchid Committee, in acknowledgement of the uniform colour of its petals. The society has commissioned a painting of the flower because it does not think photographs could portray its true colour.

McBean's hope to breed from the orchid but do not expect to start selling red orchids for at least three years. Betty Arnold, secretary of the Orchid Society, said: "Red is not a colour one normally associates with *phalaenopsis*. They are usually shades of pinks, white and yellow, which was the new colour a few years ago."

The flower was bred from seeds imported from Taiwan at McBean's premises at

Cooksbridge, East Sussex, where they grow orchids for export.

Tony Cramp, 51, said he had grown more than 10,000 orchids at the nursery before producing the perfect colour. He has named the flower *Lewes Festival* after the annual celebration in the East Sussex town.

Dr Henry Oakley, of the RHS Orchid Committee, said that breeding the flower was a tremendous achievement. "The orchid is unique in the sense of its true red colour which is uniform right out to the edges of the petals."

Mr Cramp said: "We couldn't believe it when we saw it. Everyone's chuffed that all our hard work's come to fruition."

COLOUR PRINTING TECHNOLOGY HAS FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH THE BIRO.

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HEWLETT PACKARD
Expanding Possibilities

By JOANNA BALE

home from the market. Emdadi Talukder, 44, was pierced in the head by a large piece of glass when the bomb exploded a few feet from him as he chatted to his GP. Nursing a deep gash in his scalp yesterday, he said: "There was a terribly loud bang and I saw this red car jump four feet in the air as its boot exploded. "The lid of the boot was ripped off and it flew up about 25 feet high. There was a huge fire and it went dark because

Mr Talukder tending his head wound on Saturday

Mr Talukder, who works for an educational charity at Toynbee Hall near by, was

Dr Haq, who was with her husband, Abul, her sister, Eti Chowdhury, and a friend, Kulsum Haq, another GP, was on her way home to North London from rehearsals for a Bangladeshi cultural evening. She removed the glass from Mr Talukder's head, stemming the blood with handkerchiefs.

"When an ambulance arrived, the paramedic was looking for more seriously injured people. Thankfully, everyone suffered only minor injuries."

Her husband said: "The explosion was so loud that I went temporarily deaf. It was absolutely terrifying and I honestly thought I was about to die."

Shahid Ahmed, 18, was serving in the Sweet and Spice restaurant. He said: "All the windows at the front of the restau-

Muquim Ahmed, the owner of Café Naz, which was devastated by the blast, was with his wife Rashmi and five-year-old

daughter, Monique, in Brick Lane. He said: "The force of the explosion went right through us and there was masses of fire and smoke. "My wife fainted at the shock of it all and my daughter was screaming hysterical-

Arif Ullha, 27, Mr Ahmed's tandoori chef, suffered cuts from flying glass. He said: "If I hadn't been at the back of the restaurant I would have been killed."



BY STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

But the key question before the group meeting yesterday

Interpol has been asked to contact other European forces for intelligence; MI5 has links to intelligence services on the Continent. The Yard is aware of links between neo-Nazis here and in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and America.

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The shattered window of Brick Lane police station



The parents of the late Stephen Lawrence, Doreen & Neville, share these concerns about the impact of the Bill.

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Television sitcoms turn back to suburban formula, writes Carol Midgley

BBC raises dead to give comedy new life

THE television comedy *One Foot in the Grave* is being raised from the dead to help to overcome the BBC's dearth of successful new situation comedies.

Executives have commissioned the new series of the highly popular show, the first for five years, only weeks after Peter Salmon, the BBC1 controller, announced that the corporation was killing off the "suburban net-curtain comedy".

The apparent U-turn on stand policy and the march back to the middle class milieu are an indication of the pressure that the BBC is under to deliver high-rating sitcoms.

The BBC announced at the Montreux Television Festival yesterday eight new comedies which it hopes will replace its "blue chip" properties such as *Men Behaving Badly* and *Birds of a Feather*, which are not being continued. Two of the new shows — *Other Animals* and *My Hero* — are set in suburbia.

In an internal audit earlier this month, Sir John Birt, the BBC Director-General, told executives that he was concerned about the quality of the BBC's new sitcoms and said that repeats of classic series remained more popular than many of their successors. His

THE NEW CROP OF SITCOMS

My Hero: stars Ardal O'Hanlon, who played Dougal in *Father Ted*, as a real life superman. Set in Northolt, northwest London, it centres on his difficulties in keeping real identity secret from neighbours.

Starting Out: a comedy about young romance which is being tipped as the new *Birds of a Feather*.

Too Much Fun: stars Mark Addy as an aspiring British writer in Hollywood.

Shingles: by Graham Linehan and Arthur Matthews, the wit-

ters of *Father Ted*, about two hip-plees in contemporary London. **Cry Wolf:** an Alamo production starring Jemma Redgrave.

Coupling: a relationship comedy starring Jack Davenport and Gine Bellman.

Other Animals: stars Richard Wilson and Stephanie Cole as a couple living in suburbia.

Happily Ever After: stars Paul Whitehouse as a widower who falls in love with his best friend's wife.

Let Them Eat Cake: Jennifer Saunders and Dawn French, set in the French Revolution.

Christmas. Recent new BBC comedies, such as *Kiss Me Kate*, starring Caroline Quentin, and *Heartbreak Hotel*, have not performed as well as had been hoped.

Mr Salmon has axed *Next of Kin*, a drawing room comedy starring Penelope Keith, and *A Prince Among Men*, featuring Chris Barrie, after they flopped in the ratings.

He said earlier this year: "I am the net-curtain comedy killer, the man who took out a contract on suburban sofas and knitted pullovers and will do for some of the dreary 1950s scenarios that have infected too many comedies."

Despite its often black humour, *One Foot in the Grave* is essentially a middle class comedy set in typical suburbia and centres on disputes with friends and neighbours.

However, Mr Jackson said that the new arrivals, which will start being broadcast from the autumn, would break new ground in comedy.



Back from the grave: Richard Wilson as Victor Meldrew, an old favourite returns

Channel 5 boss backs digital TV licence fee

By Raymond Snoddy
Media Editor

DAVID ELSTEIN, the chief executive of Channel 5, has backed an extra digital licence fee for the BBC of about £30 a year.

In a letter to The Times, Mr Elstein, who wants to be the next BBC Director-General, attacks the commercial broadcasters who have rejected a supplementary licence fee on the grounds that it would slow the spread of digital television.

The Independent Television Commission will also oppose a digital licence fee this week when it publishes its evidence to the Davies Panel, which is looking into future BBC financing.

Mr Elstein argues that the commercial broadcasters are prepared to sacrifice the long-term public interest in the welfare of the BBC "for their own short-term economic ends".

Letters, page 21

Youth revolution on schedule

By Carol Midgley

SATURDAY night entertainment on BBC1 for decades the mainstay of safe, family viewing, is to undergo a radical overhaul to attract the younger, cooler viewer.

Executives have decided to virtually rip up the schedule and start again from scratch after scrapping Noel's *House Party*, which they admit had begun to look tired.

They are now working on re-inventing an increasingly weak area of BBC programming with a host of new presenters, including Irish comedian Patrick Kielty and Radio 1 disc jockey Chris Moyles.

The mission to breathe new life into the schedule is being spearheaded by David Young, the new head of light entertainment at the BBC, who at 30 is the youngest person to be appointed to the post.

One of his first moves was to run an advertisement appealing for young television addicts with no experience in television but plenty of ideas for shows to write to him.

They were told to submit ideas for Noel's *House Party*

and *TFI Friday*. Chris Evans's show on Channel 4. Of the hundreds who applied, five have been interviewed and begun work on new programme formats in the next four weeks.

BBC executives have been encouraged by the success of Vic Reeves and Bob Mortimer's new game show, *Families At War*, which is a radical departure from traditional family show formats but has still been hugely successful.

However, the veteran family programme *The Generation Game* has been recommissioned and the *National Lottery Show* will remain in its current slot.

At the Montreux Television Festival yesterday Mr Young said: "There is a crisis in light entertainment TV because of a lack of ideas. The same formats and the reliance on the same shows has been going on too long."

"You could have 20 years' experience on TV and still not have an idea. Traditionally Saturday evenings have not been seen as a cool area of television."

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BALKANS WAR: AIR CAMPAIGN

Britain sends more Harriers

Nato to step up its forces, write Michael Evans and Ian Brodie in Washington

BRITAIN is expected to increase its military commitment to the Kosovo operation with a third 2,000-man armoured battle group, another squadron of eight Harrier GR7s and an extra frigate.

Following the decision by Nato leaders at the 50th anniversary summit in Washington to put even more effort into defeating President Milosevic by bombing alone — leaving the ground troops option in the hands of the contingency planners — General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander, has asked for 400 more aircraft, bringing the total to about 1,400 planes. Britain indicated that it was ready to increase its aircraft involvement in Operation Allied Force from its present commitment of 12 Harrier GR7s at Gioia del Colle in Italy and eight Tornado GR1s at Bruggen in Germany. There is another squadron of Tornados at Bruggen, but the remaining squadron of Harriers at RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire seems more likely to be sent, defence sources said.

Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia have agreed to allow their airspace to be used for Nato attacks. Hungary, one of the new Nato members, is also ready to hand over its main air bases for attacks on Kosovo.

With the airspace over the Adriatic already clogged with attack sorties, the opening up of Hungarian bases will make



Game plan: an American soldier plays with a child after his Apache helicopter made an emergency landing south of Florence at the weekend

it easier for Nato to intensify the bombing campaign.

Serbian state television was knocked off the air for the second time in three days by Nato airstrikes yesterday, but resumed some broadcasting

within 11 hours. A generator was hit, cutting off power to Yugoslavia's biggest television mast outside Belgrade, according to Tanjug, the official Yugoslav news agency.

Nato set off a row when it at-

tacked the state television studios in Belgrade last Friday, killing ten people. Lamberto Dini, Italy's Foreign Minister, said it was not a legitimate target. The only Russian Orthodox church in Belgrade, Holy

Trinity, was also damaged, the *Moscow Times* reported. Although the issue of ground troops has been pushed into the background during the Nato summit which ended yesterday, General Clark is under-

stood to have warned the alliance leaders that ground troops would still be needed to complete the job.

Peter Riddell, page 20
Letters, page 21

Extra paratroopers reinforce Apache base

A SECOND wave of seven Apache attack helicopters arrived in Albania yesterday, and an additional 2,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division were ordered to the same air base at Rinas, 20 miles from the capital, Tirana. Their arrival will bring the total number of combat troops there to nearly 6,000.

A first contingent of 24 — half the initial deployment of 24 — arrived last Wednesday.

Richard Owen in Tirana sees helicopter practice runs in mountains

The anti-tank Apaches arrived during a visit to the base by General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

The airport, where sheep once grazed on the runway because there were so few flights, is now covered in army tents, radar dishes, armoured personnel carriers and mili-

tary aircraft. Behind us, Apaches clattered into the air, making practice runs over the nearby mountains to get used to the Balkans terrain.

Captain Mark Arden, 29, from the US Army's 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment, normally based in Germany, revealed that there were women pilots in the Apache force at

Tirana. "But we had women pilots in the Gulf War, too," he added. According to one theory gaining ground here, the role of the Apaches will be to clear a corridor some 12-15 miles inside Kosovo from which the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) would operate under Nato protection. This "pocket" could then be

cleared of mines to allow the symbolic return of some refugees. US officials deny that the mounting Nato force at Tirana is the nucleus of a land invasion force. "The supporting forces are here to back up the Apaches," said Major Dan Battio, the US army spokesman. There will also be Multiple Rocket Launcher Systems together with an anti-tank company, combat engineers, and additional military intelligence units.

CHRONOLOGY OF WAR

This week

April 26: EU Foreign Ministers meet to strengthen sanctions against Yugoslavia
April 26: British armoured reinforcements arrive in Salonika by ship
April 29: More Kosovo Albanian refugees due to fly to Glasgow

April 25

● Nato planes bomb Serbian state television off the air for the second time in three days, hitting the main transmitter near Belgrade. Yugoslavia's third largest city, Nis, is attacked for the second successive night.
● US and Britain say there is no target date to put ground troops into Kosovo
● First Kosovo refugees arrive in Leeds

April 24

● Nato's 50th anniversary summit in Washington is dominated by Kosovo conflict and plans to board and search ships suspected of delivering oil and arms to Yugoslavia.
● Nato is trying to patch up relations with Russia following a sharp disagreement over the alliance's plans to block oil supplies to Yugoslavia

April 23

● Russia's Balkan envoy Viktor Chernenyrdin reported as saying Milosevic agrees to the deployment of foreign troops in Kosovo, but Yugoslavia later says it has discussed only a possible unarmed UN presence.
● Nato destroys a Serbian state television building in central Belgrade, killing at least 10 people.
● Tony Blair, speaking in Chicago, appealed directly to Americans to stay engaged with Europe over Kosovo and outlined his vision for dealing with undemocratic leaders intent on destroying any hope of a new world order

April 22

● Nato blows up Milosevic's Belgrade residence.
● Tom Walker the Times correspondent, in Yugoslavia was expelled from the country

April 21

● Nato missile blasts headquarters of Milosevic's Serbian Socialist Party in Belgrade
● US Apache attack helicopters arrive in Albania
● Yugoslavia says 10 people killed by Nato missiles at a camp in Kosovo holding Serb refugees from Croatia

April 20

● Yugoslav and Albanian troops exchange fire at border.
● A huge column of Kosovo refugees is reported by aid workers to have gone missing on the way to Albania

April 18

● Nato says 850,000 uprooted ethnic Albanians are being driven from homes and attacked by Yugoslav forces in Kosovo; US says 100,000, possibly as many as 500,000, Kosovo men are unaccounted for.
● Clinton says conflict may cost US \$6bn

Russian face seen on high

Lagnad Michael

Oil embargo

Writers con the ethical

INSIDE GE

BY ROGER

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BALKANS WAR: NATO STRATEGY

Russian ships face searches on high seas

NATO's proposed oil embargo on Yugoslavia and "blockade" of the Montenegrin port of Bar in the Adriatic will be enforced according to international law, Tony Blair's official spokesman promised yesterday.

Despite the pledge, NATO's decision to push for military action to stop oil tankers entering Bar, helping to fuel President Milosevic's tanks and armoured vehicles in Kosovo, will have to be pored over by lawyers.

One of the key areas, NATO officials said, would be the rules of engagement given to all warship commanding officers to make it clear what action they can take in deterring, intercepting or boarding tankers suspected of carrying oil for Yugoslavia.

President Chirac of France gave a strong warning on Saturday that intercepting a ship on the high seas "is an act of war in international law".

The Prime Minister's spokesman, however, insisted that it was the French idea to have an oil embargo and that Paris was fully supportive.

"Anything we do will be done in accordance with international law," he said.

Senior British defence sources at the NATO summit said that

Lawyers advise on oil blockade, report Alice Lagnado and Michael Evans

although it was intended to operate a blockade, there were also plans to bomb the roads running through the mountains from Bar to ensure that those supplies that managed to get through would be prevented from reaching Serbia.

This would reverse NATO's pledge to avoid bombing infrastructure targets in Montenegro because of the need to support President Djukanovic in his stand against Mr Milosevic. The Montenegrin leader has been assured by NATO that he will still be able to receive his country's normal oil shipments.

In return, Mr Djukanovic has agreed to allow NATO warships to control all tanker movements into Bar.

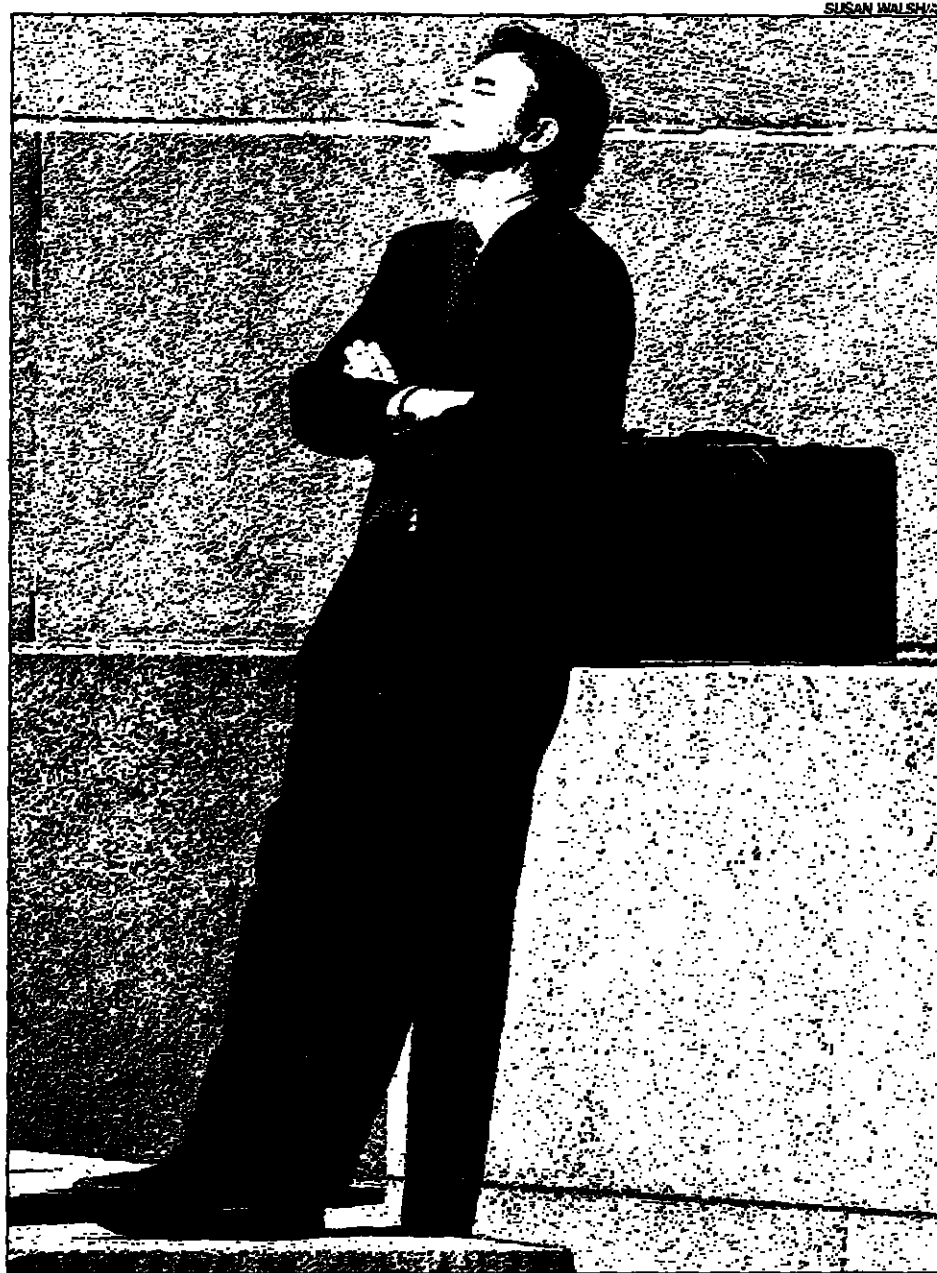
The bombing of roads in Montenegro could, however, strain NATO's relationship with Mr Djukanovic.

NATO already has sufficient

warships in the Adriatic to implement a blockade, once the legal arguments have been resolved. The United States has four cruisers and five destroyers, as well as the aircraft carrier, *Theodore Roosevelt*, and three submarines. The Royal Navy has the carrier, *HMS Invincible*, the submarine, *HMS Splendid*, and two frigates, *HMS Grafton* and *HMS Iron Duke*. Royal Marine commandos on board the two frigates would play a significant role in the proposed "visit and search" missions against suspect tankers.

The major question being asked at the summit yesterday was how NATO would react if faced by a Russian oil tanker bound for Bar. At the weekend the Kremlin made it clear that it would not respect a NATO-led oil embargo. "We cannot do anything to worsen the suffering of the people in Yugoslavia, and we will continue delivering oil in keeping with our international commitments," Igor Ivanov, Russia's Foreign Minister, said.

American officials made it clear that the naval blockade would cover all countries, including Russia. They added that the operation could be in force soon.



Tony Blair taking a break in the Washington sunshine during the Nato summit

Kosovo tests Nato's world enforcer role

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN WASHINGTON

NATO's ambitious blueprint for military intervention beyond the alliance's borders has been unveiled while that strategy is being put the test dramatically in Kosovo.

The outward-looking philosophy underpins NATO's interventionist determination, but has also exposed fresh divisions within the alliance while emphasising that its very future is at stake in the Balkans.

"We have reaffirmed our readiness to address regional and ethnic conflicts beyond the territory of NATO members," President Clinton said as the "Strategic Concept" was presented during the alliance's 50th anniversary summit in Washington. The concept provides NATO with "a road map" for military crises, according to Javier Solana, its Secretary-General — transforming a mutual defence agreement into a regional policeman willing and able to use its collective power to intervene when faced with ethnic conflagration, terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

NATO recognised the European Union's expanding role in defence policy and its right to approve military action where not all NATO members were concerned.

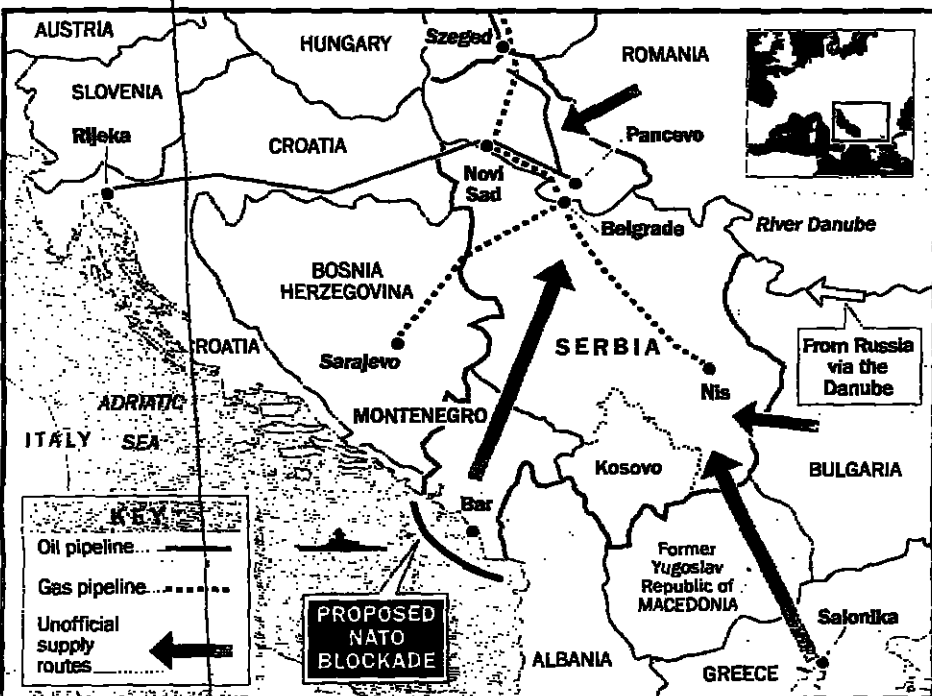
The redefining of NATO's role will equip it to "deal with

the security challenges of the new century". Mr Clinton said. The timing could hardly be more sensitive: when planners began addressing the question five years ago they little expected it would face such an immediate, defining and potentially damaging test.

If NATO's Kosovo policy fails, then the strategic concept will have been shown to be a failure before it was born. "The stakes for NATO are high," one senior US policymaker said.

Differences within the alliance have been reflected in the blueprint's drafting, most notably over the UN's role. President Chirac of France said a "primary responsibility" for maintaining international peace and security made it clear that NATO could not, and would not, act without UN authorisation — an interpretation contradicted by Señor Solana, who said a Security Council resolution would not be necessary before making an intervention outside NATO territory.

Members also agreed to expand intelligence-sharing, find ways to defend members against nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and head off a growing gap in military technology between America and the other 18 allies.



Oil embargo 'illegal'

A NATO blockade of Yugoslav ports and the forcible inspection of approaching oil tankers would be a breach of international law, legal experts said yesterday.

Stopping neutral ships on the high seas could be justified only if sanctioned by the United Nations or as a clear act of self-defence, one expert said. "It would require a new declaration."

NATO might argue that the action was justified under an extension of the doctrine of self-defence. But a unilateral declaration to that effect might not win international acceptance. To stop and board ships otherwise would be seen as aggression against the flag under which they were sailing.

The Government could try

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

to argue that Security Council Resolution 1160, which last month imposed an arms embargo on Yugoslavia, included wording that prohibited ships from carrying arms and related materiel — and this could be stretched to include oil. But that resolution still does not authorise the use of force.

After the invasion of Kuwait, Britain and America imposed a naval blockade on Iraq. But Washington insisted on a different form of words so as not to force the invocation of the American War Powers Act. Its action, called a "naval interdiction", was subsequently upheld by the UN.

Yugoslavia receives only a

fraction of its oil by sea. Until the airstrikes began, most of the 54,000 barrels it imported each day came from Russia (12,000 barrels), Ukraine, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and the European Union. Most unrefined oil was imported through two main pipelines, from Croatia and Hungary. These have been closed.

Oil, especially from Russia, also came by barge up the Danube. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday that this was a main reason for blocking the river by bringing down the bridges. Yugoslavia produces a further 18,000 barrels a day of its own oil.

Only small quantities of refined oil come to Bar, on the Montenegrin coast, and have to be taken inland by lorry.

Writers confronted by the ethical dilemma

INTELLECTUALS, like generals, talk about present wars in the light of the past. George Orwell recalled in *Inside the Whale* (1940) that what was truly frightening about the war in Spain was "the immediate reappearance in left-wing circles of the mental atmosphere of the Great War".

When the poet Vernon Scannell was wounded in the Second World War his emotional memory was:

"Not the war I fought in. But the one, called Great Which ended in a sepia November. Four years before my birth."

Similar patterns emerge in the attitudes of writers to the Yugoslav war. Some see it as a reprise of the Spanish Civil War. The parallels are not precise since the bombing is being conducted not by the Condor legions on behalf of Franco but by NATO against a fascist Balkan dictator.

Even so, I like to imagine a Spanish-style International Brigade made up of Martin

INSIDE GERMANY



BY ROGER BOYES

Amis, Julian Barnes, Günter Grass and Frederick Forsyth joining the Kosovo Liberation Army on the battlefield.

Others see the Kosovo war as Vietnam — as intended to impose an American order on a faraway place popular by victims. That is how Peter Handke seems to view it, and he, the best contemporary German-speaking playwright, has been to Belgrade to show his solidarity with the Serbs. At the weekend he was said to be going to Pristina, presumably to show solidarity with Arkan. Handke

— Austrian but claimed by the Germans until he made clear his pro-Serb sentiments — steps in the tradition of slightly crazed prophets — from D'Annunzio to Pound.

The backlash has been such — Susan Sonntag says Handke is "finishing in New York" — that his publishers have had to remind the literary world that writers are entitled to different views. Handke is pretty much alone, although some scepticism about NATO has been filtering through from the salons.

On the whole it is a case of Brains for Bombs. Grass, as Germany's best-known novelist, regards himself as its voice of conscience; he favours not only airstrikes but ground troops. His heroes are often shrewd spectators of war. So when the author talks of the lessons of Auschwitz, he shapes the debate.

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BALKANS WAR: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

UN urges Britain to take more refugees

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN was under pressure last night to take more Kosovan refugees after a row erupted over the small number to arrive since bombing started.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) called on the Government to accept thousands like other European states.

As the first plane, carrying 161 refugees, arrived in Yorkshire, Lyndall Sachs, a spokeswoman for the UNHCR, urged the Government to allow more in.

She said: "At present we have 35 countries who have offered about 100,000 places, and countries such as Germany have just doubled their intake. Originally they were taking 10,000. They have already doubled that to 20,000. Britain needs to assist in burden-sharing from the area."

Unless more refugees were flown out of Macedonia, the Balkan state might take drastic action and push them across the borders, she said.

The assault on the Government's position was reinforced by Olaf Ottunnu, the personal representative of Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-

General, who also called on Britain to take more refugees.

Referring to the refugees' arrival yesterday, Mr Ottunnu told ITV's *Dimbleby* programme: "I'm very pleased by this gesture. More is needed, both on the part of Britain and other Western countries. And they must also, more significantly, provide more support for the host families in Albania and Macedonia."

But Clare Short, the International Development Secretary, said the Government's duty was to look after people in the region and get them back to their homes. It was right to accept only those with special medical needs or who had relatives in Britain, she said.

"Of course we should help, especially needy cases. But flying people to Europe will not deal with the refugee problem. And our real duty is to defeat this evil, to look after people in the region and get them back home as soon as possible."

The £20,000 cost of flying the refugees from Skopje to Britain was met by her department.

They are to be permitted to stay in Britain for 12 months and will be able to apply for asylum. Unlike other refugees who are banned from working for their first six months in Britain, they are to be allowed to work immediately.

They will be eligible for all social benefits including income support, housing and council tax benefit, job seekers allowance and health service treatment.

A single person between 18 and 24 receives £40.70 a week in income support; a couple with dependent children over 18 gets £80.65. A family on income support also gets £20.20 a week for each child under 11, and £25 for those under 16.

TO
THE U.K.



A Kosovan boy gazes from a bus window before leaving a refugee camp in Macedonia for Britain yesterday

Kosovan children discover land of hope

Continued from page 1
a British Refugee Council worker who had travelled with them. "They are all highly relieved to be here, and grateful, but the one question they are all asking is: 'When can we go home?'" It needed just five baggage trolleys to carry

their possessions from the aircraft hold. Many had just plastic bags to hold all the things they now own in the world.

First aboard the Bulgarian airliner on landing was Catherine James, a senior West Yorkshire ambulance official who

job was to check for anyone in need of immediate medical aid. "There was one woman who complained of being unwell, but no-one needed hospital attention."

Inside the terminal they were put through what the Home Office described as "the

fastest immigration control on record". The refugees were then taken to one of two residential centres in the city.

They have all been granted visas to stay for up to a year and will be eligible to work or claim social security benefits immediately.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Tory demand for conflict inquiry

A commission of inquiry into the origins and conduct of Nato's offensive against Belgrade should be set up after the fighting ends, the Conservative Party proposed yesterday (Philip Webster writes). Michael Howard, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, said that the kind of far-reaching investigation that followed the Falklands war should be established to look into the "failure of diplomacy" that preceded the conflict, and some of the decisions taken during it.

Mr Howard and William Hague yesterday maintained Opposition support for Nato's stance, including the possibility of using ground forces, but Mr Howard called for more clarity from the Government on issues such as the legal basis for a blockade against Serbia.

Srpska arson attack

Banja Luka: The official car of Rajko Vasic, the Bosnian Serb Information Minister, was destroyed by an arson attack overnight. Mr Vasic is a member of the Government of Republika Srpska — the Serb-run part of Bosnia — which is being targeted by ultra-nationalists who resent its co-operation with the West while Nato is carrying out air raids against Serbs in Yugoslavia. (AFP)

Children vaccinated

Skopje: Unicef was today due to start vaccinating Kosovo children living in Macedonia's overcrowded refugee camps, beginning at the main Stankovic camp near here. About 9,000 under-fives will be immunised against polio, tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles, mumps and rubella. Vaccinations for those with host families, and Macedonian children, will follow. (Reuters)

Ghetto leader's support

Warsaw: The only surviving leader of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising has urged Nato to defeat President Milosevic, likening the Serb campaign in Kosovo to the Holocaust. "Milosevic will not give up," Marek Edelman said at a meeting of the Freedom Union party. "Without eliminating Yugoslavia as a system, there will be no peace in the Balkans." He also said ground troops were essential. (AP)

Media boss in hiding

Podgorica: Montenegro's most prominent independent media figure says he is going into hiding to escape capture and possible torture by the Yugoslav Army. An arrest warrant has been issued for Miodrag Perovic founder of Montenegro's Antenna M radio station and he weekly magazine *Monitor*, in a sharp intensification of the military's battle against local news organisations. (Reuters)

Left bolsters Jospin

Paris: Robert Hue, the Communist leader, rowed back on veiled threats to quit the ruling coalition if France participated in any Nato ground offensive in Kosovo. "If we quit the Government, there's no longer a united coalition on the Left and [Prime Minister] Lionel Jospin would have to go. I don't want to do the Right that favour," he said. M. Hue opposes President Milosevic but wants a return to diplomacy.

KOSOVAN HAVENS



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Law reform: Civil courts revolution • Legal aid row

Lawyers pay for delaying tactics

LAWYERS who indulge in "trial by combat" and try to drag out litigation face swingeing financial penalties from today.

Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, has given warning that in the new "landscape for civil justice", anyone who acts unreasonably and refuses a settlement offer can be forced to pay damages with punitive rates of interest on top.

Judges will take control of the pace of litigation, setting tight deadlines. They also have wide powers to encourage settlement of disputes before trial.

Lord Woolf, author of the 1996 report that is the basis of today's reforms, said: "The main object is to change the culture of our litigation scene. We want to get away from a system which is exceptionally adversarial, a big fight using up unnecessary resources, and which really is a turn-off for ordinary members of the public the system should be serving."

The shake-up makes it easier and cheaper for people to bring to court and defend a wide range of civil claims, from unpaid debts and breach of contract to personal injury actions and insurance claims. At the same time, the slow, costly system of litigation that has dominated civil justice for the past century is replaced with a judge-driven system in which lawyers will be punished and ordered to pay costs if they delay or act unreasonably.

There are built-in incentives to settle before trial and to use other methods of resolving disputes, such as mediation or arbitration. Lord Woolf said: "The courts will have

PRINCIPAL CHANGES

- Trials to be last resort, with financial incentives for litigants to settle instead
- Three trial tracks: small claims court up to £5,000, fast track up to £15,000 and multi-track for bigger, complex cases
- Judges receive powers to dis-

- miss weak claims and to impose costs penalties for delay
- Claimants' settlement offer with punitive interest to be paid by defendants who refuse offers later matched at trial
- Computers for courts and judges (delayed until next year)

the responsibility, which they have never had before, of encouraging people to settle disputes without going to court."

Under the new framework there are three tracks for disputes. Claims of up to £5,000 can be heard in the small claims court, claims of up to £15,000 in a new fast-track court where trial costs are capped, and big, complex cases on a multi-track in the High Court.

Lord Woolf said that people would be clearer about the cost of going to law. "What the ordinary person wants to know is how long it is going to take and how much it is going to cost."

Defendants would no longer be able to indulge in stalling tactics or conduct a war of attrition to wear down claimants and exhaust their resources.

From the new armoury of judges' powers he singled out the "offer to settle": if a claimant makes an offer that is rejected by the defendant, and the offer is later matched at trial, the defendant can be ordered to pay interest at 10 per cent above base rate — say 17 per cent — on the sums due, as well as full costs, again

with the same punitive interest rates.

Claimants also have to make a declaration as to the truth of their claims. If a claim later turns out to be false or ill-founded, costs penalties will be imposed. "Until now you could put forward anything to raise a smokescreen and avoid liability," Lord Woolf said. "Now people will have to mean what they say."

Some lawyers fear the changes will increase costs in the early stages of litigation, but most believe the reforms are well overdue. John Hull, a litigation partner with Richards Butler, said: "Some lawyers are worried and fear a bumpy ride ahead. No one likes change. But the customer is looking forward to it: they see they will get more for their money."

He added: "If lawyers think they can receive a claim form then sit back and do nothing until the next letter arrives, they are in for a shock. Everything will now happen at high speed and it will mean a big change in how we manage our cases."

Leading article and Letters, page 21
Law, page 41



Lord Woolf: "What people want to know is how long it is going to take and how much it is going to cost"

Irvine clashes with Law Society

BY IRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A CONTROVERSY has erupted between the Lord Chancellor and the Law Society over an advertising campaign launched by the society this week against cuts in legal aid.

Lord Irvine of Lairg issued a statement today deploring society advertisements to be run this week in newspapers as "irresponsible scaremongering". In effect accusing the society of lying and misrepresentation, he goes on: "Many vulnerable people will be made to believe that they will lose their access to legal aid. That is just not true."

Lord Irvine is said to have been furious when advertisement proof sheets were shown to his department on Friday. He accuses solicitors of being motivated by worry over their incomes, saying "the Government cannot be expected to protect every solicitor from change".

Advertisements (such as the one on page 6 of today's Times) have been drawn up as part of the Law Society's campaign against proposals to reform the £1.6 billion legal aid scheme contained in the Access to Justice Bill.

It will remove legal aid for most personal injury claims. Lawyers are expected to take such cases on a "no win, no fee" basis, with insurance firms providing cover.

LibDem hopefuls step aside in bid to block Kennedy

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JAMES LANDALE

LEADING Liberal Democrats are preparing to step aside to allow Menzies Campbell to become the main "stop Charles Kennedy" candidate in the party's leadership race.

Mr Campbell, the Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesman whose profile is rising through regular appearances to comment on NATO's action against Belgrade, is expected to emerge as the figure most committed to carrying on Paddy Ashdown's policy of close relations with Labour.

Nick Harvey, the Liberal Democrat communications chief and one of the contenders to succeed Mr Ashdown, has indicated that he will pull out to support Mr Campbell. And over the weekend, senior Liberal Democrats were putting pressure on Don Foster, the education spokesman, to do the same to give Mr Campbell what one strategist described as a "sporting chance" of defeating Mr Kennedy, thought



Campbell: seen to be having "a good war"

among party activists to be the front-runner. Mr Campbell, who was thought unlikely to enter the contest in the days after Mr Ashdown's surprise resignation announcement in January, is now strongly expected to throw his hat into the ring. He is perceived by Liberal Democrat MPs to have had a "good war", supporting the

objectives of NATO action while calling on the Government to do better over refugees. But senior party figures believe his main assets will be in his ability to appeal to wavering Tory voters who came over to the LibDems last time, and his appeal to Labour ministers who like him and have had close dealings with him during the past two years.

At 57, he would be in an ideal position to "bring on" younger MPs such as Mr Harvey after a few years in charge.

Mr Kennedy, one of the party's few MPs with star quality because of his high media profile, quickly became favourite to replace Mr Ashdown. He is portrayed as less keen on dealings with Labour, although Tony Blair is known to be relaxed about his succeeding Mr Ashdown.

Last week Mr Harvey said that he was issuing a "call to arms" to colleagues to sit down together and decide who really had the best chance of winning. The election was not an "ego trip", he said, and added: "It is not an absolute necessity for me to be a candidate."

Asked if he would back Mr Campbell, Mr Harvey replied that they "looked at things in a similar way" and would support candidates who took the party in a similar direction.

Mr Campbell told The Times: "I intend to make my final decision after the elections on May 6. But obviously a development of this kind and the position which Nick Harvey is adopting will play a substantial part in my decision. I think we view the direction the party should take in very similar terms."

The growing awareness among "project anti-Kennedy" contenders that only one can stand has yet to be mirrored by the more radical group of potential candidates. They include party spokesmen Jackie Ballard (local government), Simon Hughes (health), and David Rendel (social security). The election campaign will begin formally on June 11 and end in mid-July. The result will be given in early August.

EU warning on 'separatism'

The European commissioner for regional policy has warned against the dangers of nationalism. Asked about the SNP's policy of independence within Europe, Monika Wulf-Mathies cited the Yugoslav war as an example of what could go wrong when small states were created. "I don't think this kind of separatist approach would be a very European one."

Chernobyl call by Green Party

The Scottish Green Party is commemorating the 13th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster by calling for nuclear power to be replaced with renewable energy sources. The party's principal speaker, Marian Coyne, said hill-farmers were still coping with the consequences of the accident.



QUOTE of the day

"It's a silly and self-contradictory report from the daft end of the political spectrum"

SNP response to study showing independence could cost £10bn.

today's AGENDA

Sean Connery addresses the SNP rally in Edinburgh; David McLennan, the Tory leader, visits Shetland; Malcolm Bruce, Liberal Democrat treasury spokesman, scrutinises Labour's spending pledges; Donald Dewar in Kilmarnock and Ayr.

Connery rallies Scots

By GILLIAN HARRIS
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

SEAN CONNERY will make an impassioned plea for Scots to embrace independence at a rally today aimed at revitalising the Scottish National Party's election campaign.

In his first political speech, the former "James Bond" will urge an invited audience of 300 to fight to ensure that the SNP secures victory in the Holyrood elections.

With 12 days to go before polling day, it is hoped that

Connery, who is the SNP's most famous supporter, will galvanise activists who have been crushed by opinion polls showing that Labour has gained a 20-point lead.

The SNP promise that his speech, to which he put the finishing touches yesterday, will be "confident and inspiring". The actor was offered help in composing his address by the party leader, Alex Salmond, and the chief executive, Mike Russell, but said he preferred to use his own words.

The rally, at the Edinburgh

International Conference Centre, is being billed as the highlight of the SNP's five-week election campaign. Mr Salmond and the SNP president, Winnie Ewing, will also make speeches. Later, Mr Salmond and Connery, who donates large sums to the SNP, will go on a walkabout in the city.

Preparations for the rally have gone ahead in an upbeat atmosphere despite the party's poll showing. SNP leaders last week decided to take their message over the heads of the media directly to the voters.

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Cheese makers' threat to quit Britain

Red tape and over-harsh inspection regulations are putting squeeze on small firms, Valerie Elliott reports

SPECIALIST cheese makers are threatening to close their businesses and move abroad unless the Government's "hygiene police" relaxes enforcement of dairy controls.

New swathes of red tape, costly inspection checks and zealous enforcement by officials are threatening the livelihood of the country's 120 small specialist cheese producers.

They believe that the blitz is in response to a spate of E. coli poisonings and part of a plan to ban all unpasteurised milk from dairy products, even at the expense of family firms that have produced only safe food.

This week industry representatives are to meet Michael Wills, the Small Business Minister, to press for the exemption of small cheese makers from regulations and controls that they say are more appropriate for large corporations.

Arthur Cunyngame, the managing director of Paxton and Whitfield, the 200-year-old London cheese shop that supplies the Royal Family, said that ministers were hiding a plan to ban unpasteurised milk behind EU regulations.

He said that the 165 pages of proposed new dairy hygiene rules would befuddle a corporate lawyer, let alone a small producer.

Mr Cunyngame, who is also president of the Specialist Cheesemakers Association, argues that all cheese manufacturers are governed by the

Food Safety Act 1990, which he says is sufficient regulation.

The plight of the cheese makers has resulted in a new alliance of small producers, including sheep farmers, wine growers and abattoir owners, who also face new controls. They are soon to form an all-party Campaign for Independent Foods to lobby ministers.

Among those leading the group are the Countess of Mar, who produces her own goats' cheese, John Redwood, the Tory Trade and Industry spokesman, Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat shadow Leader of the House, and Mark Todd, the Labour MP for South Derbyshire.

Lady Mar, a crossbencher in the Lords said last night that most regulations were intended to cover a factory process in which different people performed various tasks.

"It is in the interests of family firms to produce a clean, wholesome, flavoursome product that is not going to blight their reputation. There is far more personal control than in a factory," she said.

Lady Mar said that if small producers went out of business, village communities would also be affected.

Leon Downey, whose cheese in West Wales has made the Langloft brand for more than 20 years, said that he would not hesitate to move to France if there was any sign that the Government intended to ban unpasteurised milk. He



Leon Downey says plans to ensure that a cheese from each batch is microbiologically tested would cost him £300 each week

makes more than 15 tonnes of cheese each year, and his best-selling brand is an unpasteurised hard variety.

"There are no problems with unpasteurised milk in hard cheese. It is a self-cleaning method of cheese making," Mr Downey said.

He said that lacto-acid produced by curds and whey destroyed califorms such as E. coli. "Bureaucrats

know nothing about cheese making, its principles or methods. They want to pasteurise everything... but then people will start to lose their immunity," he said.

Mr Downey fears that the Government will double the number of checks on his farm. At the moment, the annual Ministry of Agriculture cow shed inspection costs him £94,

and two more milk tests £120. He is particularly worried about plans to ensure that a cheese from every batch should be sent for microbiological testing. The £50 tests could cost him as much as £300 a week.

In most recent tests the caliform bacteria count in his cheese was 1. "To pass the test you have to be less than 100,"

he said. "The total bacterial count must be less than 20,000 — ours was 2,100."

Last night a Ministry of Agriculture spokesman said that the department was still consulting the industry over proposals to increase hygiene checks on raw milk and raw milk products.

The checks, he said, were the alternative to banning raw

milk from food products altogether. "We welcome and will listen to the views of the small cheese producers," he said.

Netlinks: cheese information: www.cheese.com Pictures of cheese: www.zen.net.com/cheese/ CheeseNet: www.wgx.com/cheesenet/

Leading article, page 21

NEWS IN BRIEF

Patient, 83, dies after trolley fall

A great-grandmother has died four months after falling from a hospital trolley. Ellen Cox, 83, needed brain surgery and 30 stitches to her head after the incident at the Royal Liverpool Hospital. Her family's solicitor said yesterday her death was accelerated by the fall.

Mrs Cox had collapsed at home when the hospital was struggling with a flu outbreak. She was left on the trolley for five hours until her fall and for eight hours after her cuts were stitched. An inquiry is being held by the hospital. Its compensation offer has been refused by the family.

Cromwell birth celebrated

Thousands of people marked the 400th anniversary of Oliver Cromwell's birth with a church service and Civil War battle re-enactment in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, where the Lord Protector of the English Commonwealth was born. The town's Roman Catholics played no part because of Cromwell's involvement in the massacres of Irish Catholics.

Second class stamp cut to 19p

The cost of posting a second class letter is cut by 1p from today. The reduction from 20p to 19p is the first in stamp prices for 14 years. Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, said the cut was made possible by the greater commercial freedom given to the Post Office by the Government. The dividend the service has to pay the Treasury has been reduced.

Army drivers put on spot

The Army is trying to improve its driving standards and reduce accidents. Stickers which proclaim "Army Driver — Be the Best" and then ask "Am I?" are being fitted to more than 1,000 military vehicles attached to 2 (South East) Brigade based in the southern Home Counties. Anyone wanting to comment about the way the vehicle is driven is invited to call a Freephone number.

Computers face virus havoc

Computer users have been put on alert to check their machines for an electronic virus that will strike today. The virus, known as CIH, lurks invisibly in a computer then causes havoc to stored data. As well as deleting files stored in the computer's memory, CIH also attempts to corrupt one of the essential core microchips which, if damaged, could leave it unusable.

Runaway heifer finds sanctuary

A heifer that escaped from a slaughterhouse has won a reprieve. A Plymouth animal charity that praised its sense of survival has raised £1,000 to send the animal to a Norwich sanctuary. It charged past slaughtermen at Kingsbridge, Devon, on arriving from a farm last week and ran into the town. After armed police and a helicopter were called, the heifer was caught in a field.

Teachers deaf to appeal of 'golden hellos'

By A CORRESPONDENT

THE Government's "golden hello" scheme to attract graduates into teaching has failed to halt the recruitment crisis, a head teachers' leader said yesterday.

John Dunford, the general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, said that some schools would soon be unable to fill posts in subjects such as foreign languages because too few young people were joining the profession.

More than two thirds of the way through the recruitment year, applications for courses starting in September look set to fall short of last year's level of 14,000. The Education Department's target is 16,800, which it says is "more realistic" than the 19,000 it had aimed for last year. A spokesman said yesterday that it was too early to say whether the target would be met.

Government concern at the low level of applications last year led to the introduction in October of golden hellos worth £5,000 for applicants to train for teaching key subjects, such as maths and science. Mr Dunford said, however, that the number of applications to teach subjects such as French, business, history and English was plummeting.

"What has the Government done about it? First they reduced the targets for secondary recruitment. Then they expressed delight that... applications for postgraduate recruitment for maths and science courses have been met as a result of their golden hello scheme. In fact, these figures mask a worsening of the recruitment crisis."

While there has been a 24 per cent increase in students

registering for maths courses, a 16 per cent increase for biology, 13 per cent for chemistry and 4 per cent for physics, there has been a 21 per cent drop in registrations for training as French teachers, 26 per cent for business studies, 10 per cent for history, 15 per cent for art, 6 per cent for English and 5 per cent for religious studies.

"The first thing we will see is schools not able to deliver the National Curriculum in foreign languages, because they simply do not have the teachers," Mr Dunford said.

"While you can perhaps convert someone quite quickly into a maths or a science teacher, perhaps bringing someone in from industry, you can't get someone to learn a foreign language that quickly and then learn how to teach it."

David Bennett, head teacher at Sackville School in East Grinstead, West Sussex, told the conference he had been forced to recruit a German teacher from a shortlist of one and "ended up being interviewed by the candidate".

An Education Department spokesman said: "We are determined to tackle recruitment issues, and the Green Paper on teachers' pay is aimed at modernising the profession and will attract more people." The Green Paper proposes performance-based pay rises of up to £40,000 for classroom teachers, but has met considerable opposition from unions. One set of parents in five depends totally on school meals to provide their children with a balanced diet and three out of five agree that those meals play a vital role, a Gallup survey has found.

Hunt for hit-and-run van driver who killed PC

By MICHAEL HORNSNELL

A TRAFFIC policeman who was run down and dragged 100 yards by a hit-and-run driver died in hospital yesterday.

PC Jeffrey Tooley, 26, was carrying out a routine speed check on the A259 in Shoreham, West Sussex, on Saturday night when he was struck by the van, apparently deliberately. He sustained head injuries in the incident, involving a white Renault Traffic van, and died 12 hours later.

The fire brigade was later called to a burning vehicle at a farm near Brighton and police were investigating to establish whether it was the van involved. It was later taken away for forensic tests.

"All his colleagues are extremely saddened and deas-

tated by his loss," said Assistant Chief Constable Tony Lake. "We have opened an incident room and are treating this as a major crime."

"PC Tooley was a highly regarded officer and he died doing a routine job, a speed check that hundreds of officers do every day. His death is very, very sad for the force and for Sussex as a whole."

Detective Superintendent Alan Ladley, who is leading the murder inquiry, said: "He was knocked down by a van that failed to stop. He suffered serious head injuries and despite being taken to Worthing Hospital died shortly before noon."

"We desperately need to trace this vehicle. It was a white Renault Traffic which

witnesses have described as having distinctive stripes down the side, possibly green in colour."

He added: "Most of all I appeal to the driver of the van to come forward and talk to us about what happened."

PC Tooley was wearing a reflective jacket and carrying a torch in a well-lit area just before midnight on Saturday when the incident occurred. He was with a fellow officer carrying out routine speed checks when the van swerved into the centre of the road and hit him.

"We are concerned this might have been a deliberate act which is why we are treating it as a murder inquiry at the moment," Mr Ladley added.



Valerie Elliott, Culture in Chief

Boys spent year planning 'big kill'

Diary shows
carnage was
meticulously
plotted, writes
Giles Whittell

A METICULOUS diary found at the weekend shows that the Columbine High School shootings were planned for up to a year down to the last detail, including hand signals used by the gunmen to maximise their carnage.

The diary, discovered on the eve of a televised memorial service for the victims in Littleton, Denver, showed that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were not targeting sworn enemies but were "going for the big kill" and the destruction of their entire school, officials said. Across the country, schools were coping with a wave of copycat bomb threats, most of them hoaxes.

Sheriff John Stone of Colorado's Jefferson County would not say which suspect kept the diary but he described its tone at a press conference: "It was 'Day One, we do this. Day Two, we do this,' counting



Thirteen roses, one for each of the pupils shot in the Columbine massacre, were placed on the fence around the school's tennis court at the weekend

down to "rock-and-roll time" at 11.15am last Tuesday, he said. Fifteen people died in the three hours of terror that followed, among them Harris

and Klebold. The suicidal teenagers had been building bombs and collecting guns for months, Sheriff Stone said. To

test they had drawn up a map of the school marking its ill-lit areas, and they struck during the school lunch-hour to corner the largest possible

number in an enclosed space. "They wanted to do as much damage as they could possibly do and destroy the school and as many children as they

could, and go out in flames." Up to 30,000 mourners were expected at a Denver stadium yesterday for a memorial service attended by Vice-President

Al Gore, Governor Bill Owens of Colorado and the Rev. Billy Graham's son, Frank Graham.

The event followed the funeral of Rachel Scott, 17, the first of the victims to be buried and a shining star at Columbine who was remembered as a gifted actress and devout Christian. More funerals follow this week.

A chilling e-mail purporting to be written by Harris before his death was discounted as a hoax. Many had joined his Trenchcoat Mafia for solidarity, and every pupil knew the gang existed. Not so Frank DeAngelis, the headmaster. "I had never heard of it until Tuesday," he said.

Five boys aged 13 and 14 were arrested in central Texas on Saturday after fellow pupils at their school in Wimberley told police about a bomb plot planned since January. Homemade bombs and instructions for building them downloaded from the Internet were found at the boys' homes. The local sheriff insisted "that these young men were serious about targeting students".

A Newsweek poll says that 50 per cent of Americans favour banning handguns after last week's massacre, the highest proportion since 1982.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Huge drug haul found in Spain

Madrid: Spanish police uncovered the largest haul of heroin to be found in Europe in the past two years (Giles Tremlett writes). They said the 319kg of drugs, found buried in containers in woods near Avila, 100 miles north-west of here, had a street value of more than £10 million. Police arrested 12 members of an international drugs gang with links to both Asia and Latin America.

They named the head of the gang as Urri Ceinkaya, 50, a wheelchair-bound Turk. They said Ceinkaya is living in Istanbul, having fled Spain after being remanded on bail in 1995. The drugs had been smuggled into Spain via Holland hidden inside a large industrial drilling machine.

Cultists besiege Beijing leaders

Beijing: About 15,000 followers of the Fa Lun Gong religious cult besieged the Chinese Communist Party leaders' compound here to demand official recognition (James Pringle writes). Those taking part in the capital's biggest protest since the violent suppression of pro-democracy demonstrations in October 1989 stood quietly, shoulder to shoulder, before dispersing after nightfall.

India heads for another election

India's main Communist party, the second biggest opposition group, rejected appeals for its leader, Jyoti Basu, 64, the veteran Chief Minister of West Bengal, to form a new government, bringing closer the prospect of a third general election within three years (Michael Binyon writes).

Mugabe tightens curbs on press

Harare: President Mugabe of Zimbabwe is tightening press controls by strengthening criminal libel laws that were introduced in the 1960s to curb black critics of white minority rule (Jan Raath writes). Journalists could no longer use "so-called civil liberties" as a shield, he said.

Australian artist Boyd dies at 78

Adelaide: Arthur Boyd, the renowned Australian artist, died on Saturday in a Melbourne hospital at the age of 78. A painter, sculptor and potter, Mr Boyd was regarded as one of Australia's great contemporary artists.

Letters, page 21

Obituaries, page 23

Briton killed in 'fortress' estate

FROM RAY KENNEDY IN JOHANNESBURG

A BRITISH resident was pinned to the floor and shot dead in the back of the head at the weekend after intruders broke into his home in an up-market Johannesburg estate which is surrounded by high security walls and patrolled night and day by armed guards.

Roger Prevett, 49, and his family were asleep in their home in Four Ways Gardens on Saturday night when his wife Linda 47, was woken by the sound of a glass patio window being smashed.

Police said yesterday she ran into a passage and saw two men. As she tried to flee back to the bedroom they opened fire shooting her in both legs and in the neck and stomach. She is seriously ill in hospital. It appeared, the police said, that Mr Prevett struggled with the men in the bedroom before he was forced face down to the floor and shot in the back of the head.

The attackers fled and although the motive for the break-in may have been robbery nothing was taken.

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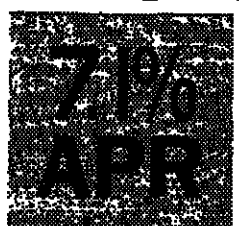
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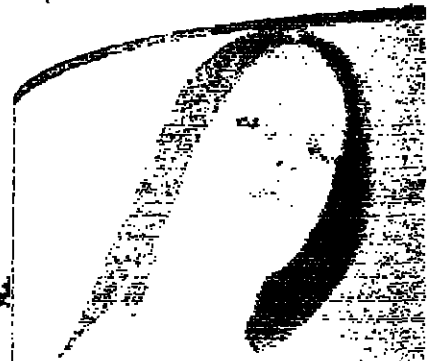
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you to
wear i



Madonna

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Madonna
FASHI
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BREAST RE

LASER HAIR REMOVAL
TREATMENT AVAILABLE
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Dare you to wear it



FAR LEFT: Jacket, £389, and trousers, £119, by Comme des Garçons at Liberty, Regent Street W1 (0171-493 1258)

LEFT: Top, £305, and skirt, £675, both by Junya Watanabe, from Liberty, as before; trousers, £39.99, by addies at branches of Office Shoes and Offspring (0181-838 4447)

ABOVE: Panel dress, £280, by Hussein Chalayan, from Browns, 23-27 South Molton Street W1 (0171-514 0051)

RIGHT: Top, £130, and skirt, £182, both by Shelly Fox from Whistles, 12 St Christopher's Place W1 (0171-251 8861)

PHOTOGRAPHER: KEVIN FOORD
Stylist: Charlie Harrington
Make-up: Alex Babsky at Mandy Coakley
Hair: Matthew Cross using LCC2 hair-care products by Goldwell
Model: Shona at Select

Perhaps years of minimalism have done it, but avant-garde fashion has never looked more desirable than it does right now. This is partly because masters of the genre such as Yohji Yamamoto and Helmut Lang have refined their art to such a degree that the intellectual statements and challenging silhouettes of their clothes have become so subtle as to pass almost unnoticed.

The cognoscenti now appreciate that innovation doesn't come only in the form of a one-sleeved jacket or heels of different heights on a pair of shoes à la Jeremy Scott, but that it can also take the shape of a gentle ripple of pin-tucks on a shirt sleeve or the shoulder straps on a padded wrap.

But although these might seem details, they are integral to the designer's overall ethos. You can bet that Yamamoto would never have arrived at the perfect white shirt and that Lang would not have such a way with his basic jeans line if it had not been for their tireless experimentation with more provocative prototypes earlier on.

Maybe the renaissance of the avant-garde (and you have only to glance at the output of Belgian designers and the interest in it to see that there is a renaissance) is partly a response to the global democratisation of style. As the high street gets better and better at copying catwalk looks faster than you can say

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"It's all about yellow", it follows that designers are going to have to become cleverer and cleverer to shake off the cheap competition. Perhaps it's simply that the avant-garde has become less strident, more deviously appealing.

You could argue that wearable avant-garde is a contradiction in terms: if something is truly ground-breaking, shouldn't it be tricky, challenging and impossible to wear? Maybe (fear not, though, there's still plenty of the hardcore stuff around). Perhaps the clothes in these pictures represent a sub-genre of the avant-garde. Or perhaps these avant-garde designers have just grown tired of experimenting with different ways to look peculiar and instead look up different ways to look beautiful.

Either way, avant-garde fashion is out there in a way that it hasn't been for much of the Nineties. Carolyn Besette-Kennedy, the ultimate uptown girl, wears it out and about in Manhattan. Hollywood fashion divas such as Madonna and Nicole Kidman are so keen to flaunt their intellectual-fashion credentials that they can't wait to slip into something a little offbeat. Do not fret that these artists are playing their needles in isolated poverty. Junya Watanabe, a protégé of Comme des Garçons' Rei Kawakubo and the creator of some of the most beautiful clothes in Paris, recently received a standing ovation for his complex metal and folded pieces. Meanwhile, slick international houses such as TSE in New York or Givenchy and Hermès in Paris recognise that even a label that pitches for the luxury sportswear or classic tailored suit market can do

so more successfully if it has an avant-garde pioneer such as Hussein Chalayan, Alexander McQueen or Martin Margiela at its helm.

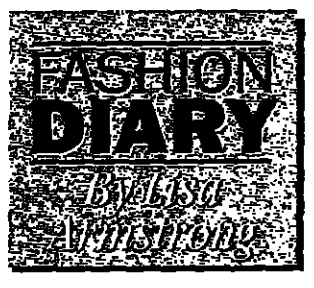
So don't think of the clothes on this page merely as making arresting images. They are meant to be worn and may well turn out to be classics of the future (certainly they stand more chance of doing so than that fluorescent-yellow poncho that you've been eyeing up for this summer).

Great avant-garde clothes have a way of becoming timeless and ageless (it's no coincidence that Yamamoto, Issey Miyake and Comme des Garçons have more 70-year-old aficionados than the average fashion label). The next time you're tempted to buy something special, consider these. The air may seem rarefied up on the plains of avant-garde fashion, but it's amazing how pure it feels once you get there.

Madonna faces the Factor

THE fact that Max Factor has chosen Madonna to be its face is all well and good — acknowledgement as it is that 40-year-old women can look attractive (remember the furore when Lancôme relieved the then 40-year-old Isabella Rossellini of the burden of her contract). And it makes sense, given that the ads mark the debut of the Max Factor Gold range.

Max Factor's enlightened attitude would be even more laudable had not all Madonna's crows' feet and laughter lines been airbrushed into oblivion. To be fair, Max Factor is by no means the only cosmetics company guilty of this sleight of hand. Revlon appears to have an aversion to showing real flesh in its ads (it has pores). Still, times have changed since Rossellini was so shoddily treated. Dayle



Haddon, a Seventies model who worked as a dishwasher in the Eighties to support her young daughter, recently saw her book, *Ageless Beauty*, heading up *The New York Times* bestseller list. Having struggled in the late Eighties to get beauty companies to adopt her as a mature spokesperson (she was 39), she founded her own company, Dayle Haddon Concepts, and the phone started ringing. A Clai-

rol contract was followed by one for Estée Lauder. For the past four years she has been the face of L'Oréal's Plenitude Revitalift. Karen Graham, another Seventies cover girl, is the model for Estée Lauder's Resilience Lift. Mand Adams, an Eighties Bond girl, is the president and company face of Marja Eutrich Green Collection, a Scandinavian line. Given that women over 35 account for 60 per cent of the market, this can only be to their benefit: make-up companies ignore these demographics at their peril.

Madonna had no problems applying herself to modelling. "I think she was flattered to be asked," says Ann Francke of Procter & Gamble, which owns Max Factor. "And when she realised that past house models included Bette Davis

and Rita Hayworth she really threw herself into things."

Madonna's enthusiasm included choosing the make-up artist Sarah Monzani, who created her Forties look in *Evita* and is now turning her into a bronzed ("it's time-consuming, Madonna never tans") Californian yoga teacher for her role opposite Rupert Everett in *The Next Best Thing*. "She's not afraid to use make-up. On *Evita* she'd put in her teeth and eyes (she wore a veneer to cover the gap in her front teeth and brown contact lenses) and she'd become Eva Perón." It takes commitment to wear veneers, contacts and lashings of fake tan, but if the part demands it... For her next campaign perhaps she'll even sport the odd wrinkle.

MARKS & SPENCER has taken so many knocks recently that it seems almost spiteful to sling yet more arrows its way. However, I had to check-out its summer offerings... the best pieces were the stretch cotton shirt with three-quarter-length sleeves, £30; the Irish linen range, which had hooded sleeveless tops for £26, and bias-cut long skirts in black or stone for £40; and some sporty hybrids such as a grey sleeveless shirt that came with a drawstring skirt, both in a grey polyester mix that looks like lightweight wool but is machine-washable. It isn't a huge cache of goodies considering the amount of merchandise on offer in the Marble Arch store, and it slots into the useful rather than the irresistible category. I can't help thinking that until it takes more notice of fashion trends, everything on its rails will look a little limp.

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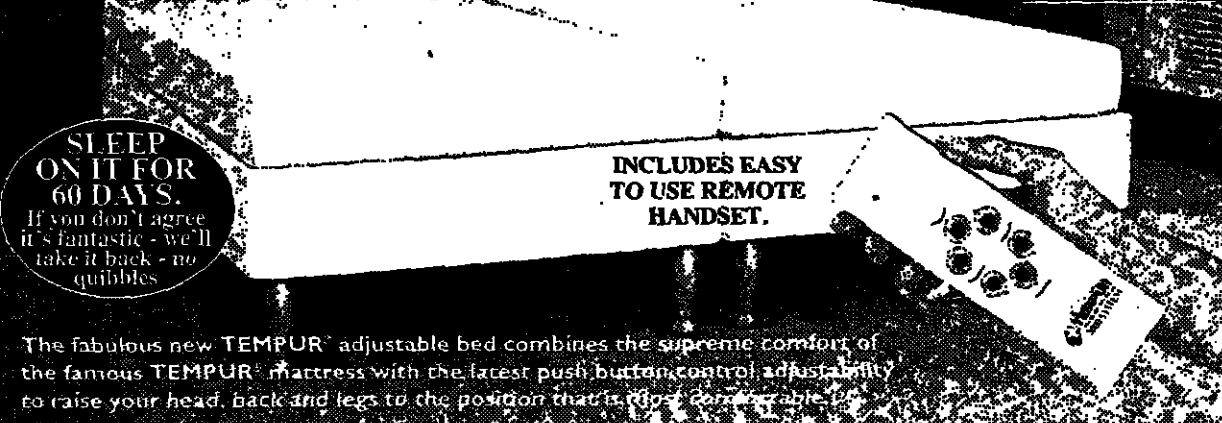
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GEORGE WALDEN: MEMOIRS OF AN ANTI-POLITICIAN

When I think of William Hague



In the first extract from *Lucky George*, the outstanding political memoir of the year, George Walden, the former diplomat and Tory minister and an acute observer of the Westminster scene, gives his candid — and often caustic — opinion on some of the leading figures in the Conservative Party

JOHN MAJOR

Coming back to Westminster after the 1992 election made me more doubtful than ever about whether I had done the right thing in standing again. Major had triumphed. Maastricht was coming to the boil, and the Right was in a vengeful mood. During his election Major had made an attempt to draw me into his circle. Sarah Hogg, his campaign manager, asked me to No 10 to sound me out about writing speeches for him, but I backed off smartly. And later, when David Mellor sounded me out over lunch about returning to the Government, perhaps at Major's instigation, I made it clear that I was not interested. I had nothing against him — how could anyone? — and certainly did not despise him. He was a conscientious man doing a near impossible job and I respected his pertinacity. It was just that I could never convince myself that he was Prime Minister or, come to that, a real person at all. The most important thing about him was his face. His features were familiar to the point of banality, yet at the same time completely uncal. At first glance everything seemed right; one more glance and you saw it was totally

wrong, an assemblage of parts that did not fit. Major was a self-made man in more senses than one, a composite person whose features fitted together as awkwardly as his sentences. It was as if the British nation, in a fit of literal-mindedness, had decided that if we were going to have a truly representative Prime Minister, then we must construct one who reflected its every physical and character trait. And needless to say, the construct came out awry. With his moderate instincts, his decency, honesty, sense of fair play, stubbornness, stylelessness, inarticulacy and lack of imagination, sometimes you felt that he was the most representative Prime Minister we had ever had, and that you could no more object to John Major than you could to the country as a whole. The trouble was that, after a brief flirtation with this benign caricature of itself, the country did object. They thought they wanted someone like themselves as Prime Minister, and when they had got him they began to think that it was not what they wanted at all.

The high point of our non-

relations came before a crucial Maastricht vote. I was planning to abstain and the whips were desperately trying to convince me that if I and one or two others did not go through the right lobby, the Government would fall. Half an hour before the ten o'clock vote Major called me into his office.

I could never be persuaded he really was Prime Minister

He looked in a poor way and I felt sorry for him. I was feeling a bit sorry for myself. I had got myself into a tricky position. I opposed Maastricht because I feared it was a treaty too far which would eventually damage Europe by taking integration beyond its natural limits. Other rebels opposed it because they had an ideological aversion to Europe or were populist chauvinists. It was from fear of being listed in the political company of Bill Cash or Teresa Gorman that I was abstaining rather than voting against. Now, like Major, I was in a corner.

I explained my position. After rambling on about the dangers, he suddenly said: "I

didn't ask for this job." I had heard he was getting low, but this seemed to me an unacceptable thing for a Prime Minister to say, and I felt oddly indignant. If my composite leader couldn't convince himself that he really was the Prime Minister, how could anyone else?

"You can't say that, Prime Minister," I told him curtly. "Any other minister can say it but you. They are appointed but you appoint yourself."

His remark was pathetic, but the pathos worked. When you feel sorry for people you do not go out of your way to make life more difficult for them. It was one of those rare moments in Parliament when the way you vote

might actually matter, and I had to choose between my misgivings about Maastricht and the risk of bringing the Government down, or at least fatally weakening it. Unable to face being lumped in with the Eurosceptics, in the end I swallowed my pride and, ingloriously, voted for the Government.

They were lucky I did.

Major won by three votes. To judge by his frame of mind that night he seemed in a mood to resign. I don't recall Major thanking me; perhaps the man who had told me that he hadn't asked to be Prime Minister didn't really want to win.

1996: The Conservative Government ground on. One day Major came into the Tea Room. As usual I felt uncomfortable in his presence. I had criticised him from time to time yet he was always smilingly courteous. An achingly decent man struggling to hold the Government and party together.

Major left off eating his jam score and reached for the Standard. "Now, George, let's have a look at your stars. What sign are you?"

"Virgo," Major solemnly looked up my horoscope and read it out: "In spite of all your work in an important area of your life you may not have succeeded as you had hoped. Don't go on doing something you don't enjoy."

I laughed and hastily diverted the conversation. Only John Major could give you a new respect for horoscopes. The previous evening I had discussed with Sarah the modalities of giving up my seat.



John Major: an achingly decent man assembled from parts that never quite fit

AS polling day approaches, a sort of frenzied optimism is mounting in direct proportion to the slump in the party's electoral fortunes. They go on pretending that victory will somehow be snatched from the jaws of disaster even when those jaws, in one by-election after another, are biting lumps out of the party's living flesh. And, of course, their hopes are pinned on neo-nationalism. Europhobia is breeding a crazed euphoria. Bolstered by the propaganda in the

JOHN REDWOOD

Right-wing press, more and more Conservatives believe that all you have to do to dispose of new Labour is to strike super-patriotic postures. Say boo to Johnny foreigner and the voters will flock to you. To me they appear as raving romantics, as desperate for an enemy as we once were for a role, and subconsciously transporting our late and deeply mourned

adversary from Moscow to Brussels. John Redwood is running about in jaunty clothes, his saturnine features swathed in a manic grin. He has just stood against Major and is delighted with the publicity, which he sees as a successful first step to persuading the country that he is a human being. The trouble is, the more he tries to be like a normal person, the madder he looks. Redwood is studiously courteous to me, since I have publicly threatened to leave the party if he is

elected leader, and he wants to show what a big, forgiving man he is. One evening I find myself sitting opposite Redwood at dinner in the Commons. Tonight he is excelling himself, crazier than ever, got up in light suit and bright tie, and as I listen to his demented talk about how useless German cars are, oh no, a Jaguar for him every time, he's so bloody patriotic he's got two of them. I am tempted to look under the table to see whether he is cross-gartered, in yellow.

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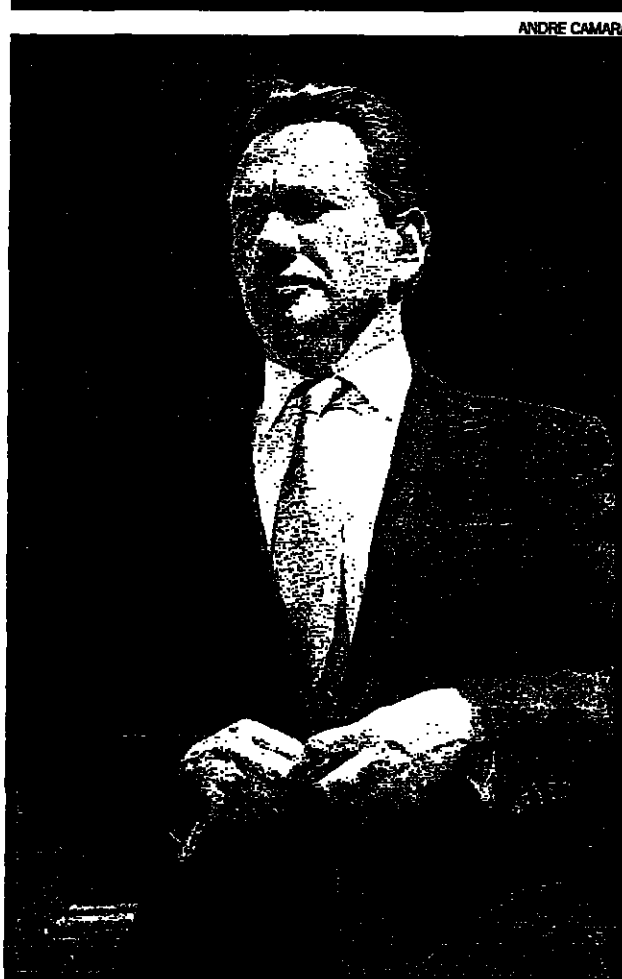
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From strutting Churchillian to everybody's friend

MICHAEL PORTILLO



Portillo: his foreignness is a problem only for himself

As the Tory party splits asunder on Europe and a great void opens in the middle, the choice is to line up with one side or the other, and I am tempted by neither. What the party fails to notice is that, in so far as they spend their time thinking about Europe at all, the electorate are camped on the territory that the bulk of the party has vacated: somewhere in the middle.

Amid all this, Michael Portillo strides about the Commons like a man of destiny. Our Minister of Defence moves with Churchillian mien and fateful tread, as if preparing to announce his decision to loose off a battery of nukes against — well, whom exactly? That is Portillo's problem: against whom to defend our imperilled nationhood.

I had got to know him when he replaced me as a PPS, and liked him more as an individual than as a public man. He was certainly bright, and a competent Minister of Defence, yet he is a man with a problem. The trouble with Portillo is that he is immature. The immaturity stems from his obsession with his name and appearance, and from the fact that outside politics he is a highly inexperienced man.

God knows we all have our problems, and our aspirations are invariably dogged by our past, but I can think of no other politician who faces the same hurdle as Portillo: to become Prime Minister of Great Britain while convincing the electorate and himself of his Britishness. His insecurity as to his nationality seems so deep as to be ineradicable. One can only suppose that he was twinned at school about his black hair, thick lips and "dago" name and never got over it. The narrowness of his background — from Harrow to Cambridge to politics, with not much in between — makes things worse. Had he done National Service or seen a bit of the world all that sensitivity about his origins would have been knocked out of him long ago.

The irony is that his foreignness is a problem for no one but himself. He seems not to

understand that the British actually like a bit of exoticism, to listen things up, and providing you are good at the game you play, and choose England as a place to play it, they will wish you the best of luck. He could be an outstanding politician if only he stopped fretting about himself and got to know his country. As it is, Portillo in full patriotic cry sounds distinctly foreign, for all the world like some Argentine general banging on about *la patria* in his bemuddled uniform and braided cap.

CHASTENED by the loss of his seat, now he is sliding from one extreme to the other. Our go the Churchillian mien and fateful tread. Now we are called on to admire a brand

Portillo's new persona will not work. He is certainly succeeding in forcing himself on our attention. With William Hague as his chief rival, that may not be saying much.

So maybe one day Portillo will make it. In a sense I hope he does, if only because his neuroses are more interesting than Hague's genial vacuity. Somehow our self-styled de Gaulle contrives to impart the feeling that he is waiting in the wings for the nation's call — and who knows, maybe the call will come?

Portillo is a far from dislikable man who commands loyalty among his supporters, whose very uncertainty about himself can evoke sympathy, and who could yet insinuate himself into the nation's affections through his television series and the rest. One can imagine a scenario some years ahead where Portillo is back in the House, William Hague is ditched as ineffectual, Portillo replaces him, Labour find themselves in economic trouble, economic and monetary union explodes six months after we join in a sod's law replay of the ERM, and Portillo gets in by a landslide on a quasi-nationalist ticket.

How would our national saviour make out in office? The judgment of a politician who is perpetually trying to convince people of something about himself will always be suspect, so we must hope that this able and intelligent man is bright enough to throw off some of the Little England riff-raff surrounding him, and to learn from mistakes.

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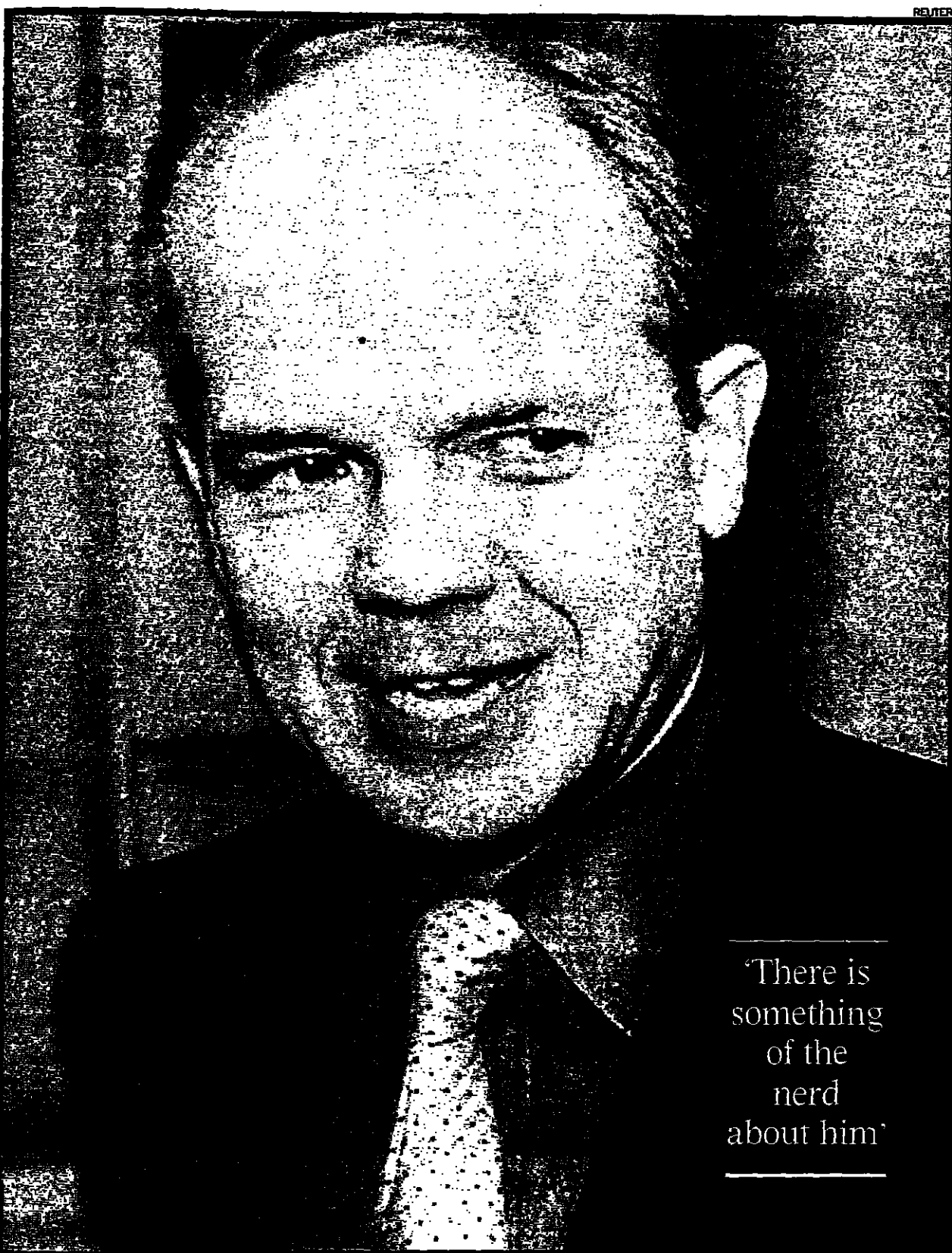
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GEORGE WALDEN: MEMOIRS OF AN ANTI-POLITICIAN

nothing occurs to me



'There is something of the nerd about him'

William Hague: "There seems no harm in him because where there is no personality there can be no harm"

WILLIAM HAGUE

WHENEVER I talked to Hague in the Commons and asked him how things were going or for his opinion on this or that, he either smiled or giggled. I am told it was the same when he was in Cabinet, though there it was more smiles than giggles.

For all his brightness and McKinsey past there is something of the nerd about him: what can you say of a man who since his early teens has been transposing MPs? Of course he's good at PM's Question Time: he's been playing at being Prime Minister all his life. It's just bad luck on him that Question Time, in the popular imagination, has ceased to be important. Pity he didn't go through the normal phases of being a Green or a Trotskyist. Like those infuriating voters who say "Don't worry about me, I've always voted Tory", you want to say to him, look, you're an intelligent fellow, has it never crossed your mind, not even once, that there could be another way of looking at things?

He has all Major's niceness and decency, in corporate form, and there seems no harm in him because where there is no personality there can be no harm. In all the years we were in Parliament together somehow I can't recall a single thing he has ever said or done that is of interest.

When I think of William Hague, nothing occurs to me.

Not giving a sod is Ken's forte

KENNETH CLARKE



Kenneth Clarke: an entertaining parliamentary character

POOR Ken Clarke battles on, genially exasperated, and you have to hand it to a man who never lets his exasperation drown his geniality. In his position I might be tempted to hit someone. He invites me to a meeting with half a dozen colleagues to discuss electoral strategy (why me, I cannot imagine). The meeting is a waste of time. The jet-lagged, florid-faced Chancellor cannot breathe a word without some Euro-maniac saying, well that's all very well, Ken, but what about EMU and the convergence criteria? What is really astounding about him is that, while most other pro-Europeans are busily trimming, Ken just goes on saying what he thinks.

One evening I ask him where he's off to next. Southern France, he says, and boy am I looking forward to it. All that fantastic food and wine, superb weather. I love it down there! I find myself glancing round to see who's listening. This is traitorous stuff, like a Soviet finance minister saying he is off on a trip to the West and by Christ he is glad to get out of this hole. For this is a party where allegedly grown-up people like William Cash go round saying they don't like continental wines, never have done, give me Australian any day. When I select burgundy in preference to oenotic or South African at dinner, jokes are made about francophilia. But of course they are not jokes. This party is not just sick unto its soul, it's sick unto its liver.

Ken doesn't give a sod. Not giving a sod is Ken's forte, and being a lazy sod somehow increases the attraction. He is too indolent to care what becomes of him in the party. If you want me as leader, he seems to be saying, take me as I am, along with my thoroughly genuine and touchingly non-representational wife, Ken and Mrs Ken are the least political pair in Parliament and therefore, in the eyes of a non-politician like myself, greatly to be applauded. The trouble is

that behind it all he would be very happy to be leader, but knows he is going nowhere.

The paradox of our Ken is that the bluff outspoken pro-European is a super patriot, a professional Mancunian who seems to think that we are every bit as good as we were and have a monopoly of common sense. So why all the fear and defensiveness about Europe? In a curious way his cavalier optimism about the single currency and European integration is as much a form of British complacency as the Euro-phobes' opposition. He thinks we are above it all and can bluff our way through. Have another one? Well, kind of you to ask, I think I will. Cheers!

The last time I saw him

was after the elections. By then he had lost his leadership challenge and was as far out in the new Tory party as it is possible to be. A couple of months earlier he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer; now he was sitting alone in the Garrick. He joined us for dinner, and was as much himself as ever. No bitterness, no venom, just lots of enthusiasm about a bird-watching trip he was planning. His future seems to be to turn into one of our parliamentary characters, of the more entertaining variety, though it seems a waste.

● Extracted from *Lucky George* by George Walden, to be published by Penguin on May 6, £17.99, available to Times readers for £15.99p. From The Times Bookshop, tel: 0900 134459

CHRIS PATTEN

WHEN I heard that Chris Patten was being considered as Governor of Hong Kong, I felt concerned. For all his talents and "watcher, cock" amiability, I was by no means sure that he was the man to steer the place through the years ahead. I told him that he would find himself dealing with two sets of intolerable people: the Chinese Communists, who were among the biggest bastards in God's creation, and the local Chinese fat cats.

many of whom ran them a close second.

Having accepted the job, Patten began playing David to China's Goliath. I went to see Hurd and told him I did not understand our tactics. If more voices were needed to denounce the Chinese leaders, I would be happy to oblige. Otherwise I did not see how the frightened old men of Beijing,

who had crushed students under tanks in the presence of the world's cameras, could be sensitised to the need for more democracy in Hong Kong by public pressure alone.

Hurd was his usual "now let's be sensible and keep steady" self. The only reassurance he could offer was that the Americans were "four square behind us. I watched for signs of their support, and saw what I had expected: the White House proclaiming the sanctity of human rights at the top of its voice then instantly buckling under the pressure of the US business lobby.

I was indignant about what I saw as a hypocritical British policy, endorsed for opportunistic reasons by all sides of the House. Our late conversion to democracy in Hong Kong was essentially a conscience-salving exercise: to assuage our guilt in handing back a colony we had taken under the immoral circumstances of the Opium War to an immoral regime. Far from being heroic and altruistic, our stance seemed to me to be self-serving and, in a sense, cynical. There was every chance that our tactics would end up leaving the people of Hong Kong with less democracy, not more. Which is exactly what happened.

Not everyone was blind to what was happening. Quite a few Tory backbenchers took the view that, in their words, Patten had "buggered it up". But Hong Kong was not the sort of issue that led to backbench rebellions.

So the British decked themselves out in their moral finery, and the charade took its course. The Royal Yacht sailed in, the retreat was movingly orchestrated, Patten's friend Jonathan Dimbleby made a hagiographic TV film based on his still more hagiographic book *The Last Governor* and "honour" was satisfied. The Chinese had their pretext to undermine the elected Legislative Council, and proceeded to do so, so everyone was happy.

One crucial, unanswered

question remains. Before Patten was appointed, a confidential understanding defining the degree of democracy Hong Kong would enjoy had been reached between the British and Chinese Governments, and enshrined in an exchange of letters signed by Douglas Hurd. It is hard to think of anything more central to Patten's mission, yet in *The Last Governor* Dimbleby says that Patten had not seen or heard of the letters before the confrontation speech he made after his arrival. No wonder the Chinese Communists called Patten a double-dealer.

For reasons best known to himself, Dimbleby fails to answer the central question: how could Hurd, who had signed the letters, and Major, who



Patten: unanswered questions

must have been in the know, have failed to warn Patten? Dimbleby shuffles the blame on to officials, and quotes Hurd as chiding them for not reminding him to show the vital letters to the new Governor. This explanation is unconvincing. Why did Hurd and Major not tell Patten personally that there might be some difficulty about re-engaging the battle for democracy, on account of how they had long since sold the pass? If he was kept in the dark, Patten would seem to have a legitimate grievance. Yet given the relationships involved, we seem unlikely to discover the truth from the luvvie circle of Dimbleby/Hurd/Major/Patten.

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POP
Happy Mondays
for Happy
Mondays
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THE TIMES ARTS

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Paris hails the African Rodin

VISUAL ART: Adam Sage visits a bridge over the Seine to see the sculpture show that is causing a sensation in the French capital

A cold, unpleasant rain is falling on the French capital. The Seine is choppy. It is a day for right-thinking Parisians to begin lunch at 11.45am and continue eating until late afternoon. But on the Pont des Arts, several hundred people are ignoring common sense, pangs of hunger and the chill wind to witness the most successful exhibition in Paris this spring.

The bridge contains 68 sculptures by a Senegalese artist, Ousmane Sow, who was almost unknown in France until now. His large, rough-hewn figures portray African tribal peoples, including the mighty Nuba wrestlers and his own slender, elegant ethnic group, the Fula. The centrepiece is a frieze that tells the story of the Battle of Little Big Horn. A giant and faintly African-looking Sitting Bull implores the gods to help him. A few metres along the Pont des Arts, one of General George Armstrong Custer's soldiers is scalped by a Sioux warrior.

The sculptures are the latest in a series of free open-air exhibitions laid on by Paris Town Hall. Over the past decade, there have been works by Botero and Giacometti on the Champs Elysées and, last year, by Mark di Suvero on the Champs-de-Mars.

The announcement of this year's attempt to "bring art to the people" met, at first, with incredulity. How would sophisticated Parisians react to the powerful, sensual but unsophisticated work of Sow. French critics asked, "Everyone is extremely upset," said *Le Monde* as the exhibition opened. "Absolutely everyone."

Not so today. As more than 5,000 people cram morning and afternoon on to the small pedestrian bridge between the Louvre and the Académie Française, Sow has won stunning acclaim and popularity.

"The African Rodin" was how *Le Parisien* described him. "One of the world's greatest living sculptors" was *Le Monde's* reconsidered verdict. A burly security guard at the Académie end of the Pont des Arts said: "The

bridge is a mass of people at the weekend. You can't move and we have to let them on in small groups." The Town Hall says this is one of the most successful open-air exhibitions it has put on.

If the crowds are a surprise, then so, too, is Sow's career. Born in Dakar in 1935, he trained and worked as a physiotherapist for 30 years before turning to sculpture at the age of 50. His first shows were held in the basement of his practice in Paris, where he emigrated in the 1970s before returning to Senegal as his work started to attract critical attention 20 years later.

His knowledge of the human body is clear and striking. The muscles on the 2.5m tall Indians at Little Big Horn are tense. The Nuba wrestlers are poised to spring forward with an earth-shaking leap.

'More than 5,000 people pack the Pont des Arts'

"We live in an electronic world where we ignore what is essential," says Sow, who himself measures almost two metres. "Me, I talk of the human being." There is energy, sex and violence. "We have to struggle to conquer the woman we love," he says. "The struggle is a means of existence."

His figures are built up using layers of cloth sacking around an iron frame, giving them an air of papier-mâché. But the artist refuses to reveal the ingredients that go into his paste. "It is a synthetic vegetable product that is macerated in about 20 different casks."

He claims to seek energy and movement more than realism. "If you want precision, you could copy the wooden horses from roundabouts," he says. "They are perfect but have no life, no depth." Yet to his crowds of new admirers, Sow is a welcome change from the highly abstract art that dominates contemporary Parisian exhibitions. "This is all accessible, unlike most modern art," said Serge de la Vallée, a 43-year-old builder from Paris. "Everyone can get the gist of it straight away. It's great." So great, in fact, that he had skipped lunch to see it.

● Ousmane Sow's sculptures are on show until May 20



Bridging a cultural divide: a few of the 68 giant sculptures created by the Senegalese physiotherapist turned sculptor, Ousmane Sow

Smoke without fire

The American playwright Alex Finlayson has something of a special relationship with the Royal Exchange Theatre. This is her third play to be premiered here, and the third to poke a penetrating finger at the social malaises of very different American cultures. Following in the nomadic footsteps of *Winding The Ball* (set in a supermarket in small-town USA) and *Misfits* (set in Hollywood), this time she pitches up on a tobacco farm in North Carolina.

The play takes place in the present, and we all know the status of smoking in America today — somewhere between the criminal and the insane. Finlayson's three generations of farmers, the Smalls, have got the weed in their blood in more ways than one. Now they find themselves the beneficiaries of a concern going nowhere. The daughter, Vette, is all for selling up and moving on. Her father, Hearon, vows

THEATRE

to defend his birthright to the death — though not necessarily his own.

Finlayson paints in the political and economic background with a strong sense of historical perspective. David (Julian Forsyth), an English documentary-maker, is conveniently on hand to elicit Hearon's informative tirades. "Up top every one of them columns, up at the United States Capitol Building, is a tobacco leaf," he rants to camera. "Tobacco built this country."

It is an intriguing business and Trevor Peacock's garrulously drawing Hearon is an entertaining guide. But Finlayson's play is essentially a tale of family strife, and here it comes unstuck. To my mind the characters are too under-developed for anyone to care much why Vette is such a tart or her near-speechless nephew, Reno, such a troublemaker. Both are something to do with Hearon's latent irascibility; but he, too, turns so quickly from moonshine-swilling old grump to gun-toting madman that Peacock himself looks rather taken back by it.

Where Finlayson does score is in the quality of her dialogue and, save for some ghostly goings-on, the naturalism of her setting. The realistic sets of tobacco warehouses and fields and the cicadas on the soundtrack conjure up an almost filmic feel. The director, Gregory Hersov, finds an easy familiarity between the characters, and the talented cast are wholly watchable.

LISA VERRICO

NIGEL CLIFF

A blast from the indie past

POP
Happy Mondays
Manchester



In the mood to dance: Bez in action at the Manchester gig

The recent glut of pop group reunions has produced few comebacks more unlikely than that of Happy Mondays. The Manchester band famous for inventing indie-dance music split acrimoniously six years ago. The only member to have been heard of since is the singer Shaun Ryder, whose brief reappearance with Loose Fit, which was followed by a run of old favourites such as *God's Cop*, *Kinky Afro*, *Denis*

sively from *Pills 'N' Thrills*. A surprisingly tight, infectious funky set began with *Loose Fit*, which was followed by a run of old favourites such as *God's Cop*, *Kinky Afro*, *Denis*

words scrawled on to pieces of paper. His memory had not improved, however. The newly professional Mondays had simply placed Autocuts all over the stage.

The only real criticism of the evening was the absence of the original guitarist Mark Day, whose unique playing style was a large part of Happy Mondays' distinctive sound. Replacement Wags, formerly of Black Grape, may have been technically better, but he could not recreate Day's endearingly haphazard chords.

The show ended with an encore of the new single *The Boys Are Back In Town*, and a spectacular, ten-minute rendition of the early hit *Wrote for Luck*, during which Bez's two

kids and Shaun's eldest daughter were brought on stage to shake maracas. This was Happy Mondays in sensible mode, perhaps for the first time.

LISA VERRICO

NIGEL CLIFF

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Fido (Lillian Watson, left) and Poppet (Leah-Marian Jones, right) put their best feet forward in Britten's *Paul Bunyan*

Britten at large in America

There's a slight but very positive sense of conflict about this welcome revival of Britten's "American opera" of 1941, happily salvaged from the Royal Opera's cancelled 1999 season. First there's the sheer entertainment value of the show itself: Richard Hickox's big-boned conducting, Francesca Zambello's helpfully inventive production in Hildegard Bechler's economic decor (wonderfully lit by Wolfgang Göbbel), the performances of each and every member of the large cast — all seem quite faultless.

OPERA

Paul Bunyan

Sadler's Wells

All of which led to speculation on what might have happened had the Britten-Auden partnership not foundered — as some hard-hearted persons still argue — into English, not to say Anglican, parochialism and personal concerns with much creaking of closet doors. *Bunyan* looks out into the world, looks at the foundation of a new society: the later opera tends to look inward. Unprofitable speculation, of course: no one is going to complain about the series of masterpieces that followed.

And one must beware of overpraising the piece. Of course there are faults: Britten isn't always in tune with Auden's flippant, Cole-Porterish verbal humour; the Swedish lumberjack's mutiny doesn't quite work; and I still have doubts about the all-too-aply named "camp animals". But any potential flaws are minimal. Zambello's big, bold production, which won one of its awards specifically as an ensemble undertaking, which is what it is: every member of the

chorus is a principal, and vice versa. It is the superbly disciplined singing of Terry Edwards's Royal Opera chorus that most clearly reveals Britten's genius, ironically in that the piece was written essentially for amateurs.

But it is an ensemble into which an international tenor like Kurt Streit, new as Johnny Inkslinger, can fit effortlessly, and Lillian Watson's brilliant performance as the camp dog Fido almost won me round (Zambello wisely eschews canine costumes). To hear a singer like Peter Coleman-Wright using breath control to spin long lines in the simple-sounding ballads is enormously rewarding, and the same is true of Timothy Robinson in *Hot Biscuit*. Slim's entrance number, the catchiest in the score. Susan Gritton is enchanting as the protagonist's daughter, though her entrance, and immediate marginalisation, is another dramatically awkward moment.

But it is the ensemble that counts. The closing image shows the whole company, motionless, gazing into the audience, left on their own after the abdication of their leader to build a new stage was saying something. Unforgettable.

RODNEY MILNES

CONCERTS: Beethoven gets the Richard Strauss treatment; Brahms is treated to a makeover; and a Bach expert makes allowances

Heroics coupled

Richard Strauss

RICHARD STRAUSS had his way with Mozart, as Rodney Milnes recently reported when reviewing the first UK performance of Strauss's idiosyncratic edition of *Idomeneo*. What he did to Beethoven pales by comparison, as we heard in the second of the City of London Sinfonia's tributes to Strauss in his 50th anniversary year.

At the end of his long, sombre elegy, *Metamorphosen*, the sense of déjà vu experienced in hearing its main theme is explained. This is the funeral march of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, no less: Strauss wrote "in memoriam" beneath the notes. It is 1945; and this was a shuddering wake not only for a fellow composer, but for Munich, Berlin, Weimar and Dresden.

These resonances moved powerfully through the performance by the CLS, conducted by Richard Hick-

ox. All 23 solo strings stood to play (except the cellos and basses); as they passed each other fragments of Strauss's great arch of melody, first spinning them, line by line, then weaving them into complex polyphony, the players, too, seemed to be paying their own tribute.

The impression was enhanced by the fact that the Beethoven symphony was still reverberating in the air after its performance earlier in the evening. The thematic connection, though, seemed to be the only reason for this *Eroica* performance. Neither Hickox nor his band had a great deal to say about the work. This was a respectful, meticulous and cogently argued performance, which is not, perhaps, quite all that this symphony could or should be.

Beethoven and Strauss formed a strong framework for another canny piece of programming: Haydn's cantata *Ariadne a Naxos*. Strauss's own chamber-operaic response to the myth of the abandoned Ariadne will be heard tomorrow, but, for the time being, Christine Brewer took charge of the Haydn in no uncertain terms. Her lustrous soprano brought the distressed Ariadne's questions into foreground focus before conjuring up a startled vision of the approaching Argive ship, and finally withdrawing into faded hope.

HILARY FINCH

Flexible to a fault

Philharmonia

A FORTNIGHT ago Daniele Gatti and the Royal Philharmonia gave us a Brahms First recalling Karajan or Kempe. If Christian Thielemann and the Philharmonia did not invite similar comparisons with their Brahms Fourth, it was partly because this conductor invokes different antecedents, and partly because his interpretation, though remarkable, raised a doubt or two.

Thielemann gave notice of his intentions with the first note: a quavering, infinitely protracted upbeat that clearly signalled much rhythmic latitude in the movement to come. Where Gatti was surging and passionate, Thielemann elected for his spiritual mentor, Furtwängler.

Nowhere was this latitude more marked than at the approach to the recapitulation with its massive ral-

lento which then gradually picked up speed and then stormed off in the coda. The finale similarly encompassed a broad largamente near the start and a heady ending, while the slow movement was allowed generous space to unfold.

Evidently Thielemann was endeavouring to create a living organism unconstrained by regular metre or unified tempo. The danger, not entirely avoided, is that such freedom sounds artificial rather than spontaneous. Yet if I had to choose between this approach on the verge of self-indulgence and the unadventurousness of so much Brahms one hears, I would opt for Thielemann's experimentalism any day.

There was less willingness on show in Schumann's *Konzertstück* for four horns and orchestra and Mozart's Violin Concerto No 3 in G. In the former, Michael Thompson stepped in at short notice to provide the principal horn part in his own edition of the work. Designed to relieve some of the superhuman difficulties of the part, his edition spreads the load among the other players (Robert McIntosh, Laurence Davies and James Handy). In the Mozart, Christian Tetzlaff demonstrated exemplary Classical manners, but with just a hint of subjectivity in the veiled Adagio.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Bach with some bite

Mass in B Minor

THERE is a third way. While Frans Brüggen no doubt prefers to conduct Bach's Mass in B Minor on period instruments — as he recorded it — there is no reason why a performance by an ensemble like the Scottish Chamber Orchestra should not be at least acceptably authentic.

It is not just a matter of knowing how Bach sounds with a period-instrument orchestra and of imitating it on modern instruments. That doesn't work. It is more a matter of making the right compromises in apportioning the ideal in terms of balance, colour and articulation. At the same time there is the question of the voices to think about, of casting the soloists and of accommodating a non-specialist chorus in the general concept.

In St Mary's Cathedral the 50 or so voices of the SCO Chorus sounded just about right. Divided into a

double chorus in the *Osanna*, some of the eight parts were hard pressed to retain their place in the texture. On the other hand, there was no lack of contrast in the almost overdramatic transition from the clouded chromaticism at the end of the *Crucifixus* to the brilliant D major at the beginning of *Et resurrexit*. And in coping with what Brüggen presumably feels to be authentically brisk tempi, the ensemble survived more or less intact.

With the soloists, the compromise might have been better adjusted. Emma Kirkby, an essentially period-instrument voice, was out of place here, particularly when in partnership with Catherine Wyn-Rogers, who is more operatic. In this context the two male voices, James Ooley and Neal Davis, both of them displaying unaffected integrity, were more appropriately chosen.

As for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, while some of the instrumentalists awarded obligato roles were more stylish than others, the high horn and trumpet sound, the fluency of the oboe d'amore, the sensitivity in retaining a true balance with the soloists and chorus, the clarity of the textures — even in a cathedral setting — were admirable features of a generally serious but entirely unsolemn performance.

GERALD LARNER

This week in THE TIMES



THEATRE

Prunella Scales takes centre stage in Pinter's *The Birthday Party* at the Piccadilly



MUSIC

Raising funds for Croatian monuments: Ivo Pogorelich plays Chopin in the RFH



DANCE

The St Pancras Chambers provides an unusual setting for Spring Loaded's *Salome*



FILM

David Cronenberg's bizarre sci-fi thriller *Existenz* stars Jennifer Jason Leigh

PLUS: Melodic pop with a hard edge: the Cardigans play a gig at the Albert Hall

OPERA & BALLET

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The other crises? What crises?

Keeping Blair's mind on the Balkans has its price

No Prime Minister can handle more than two crises at the same time. This old Downing Street adage is being tested to the full at present. All crises have opportunity costs — other issues do not receive the attention that they otherwise would. Decisions are not taken, or are fudged.

The domination of Tony Blair's diary by Kosovo has affected the other urgent issue, Northern Ireland. Although closely involved in attempts to break the current stalemate, as he will be again this week, Mr Blair has not been able to devote the time in intensive, face-to-face talks that he did before the Good Friday agreement. He may not be able to achieve a breakthrough, but his personal role is seen as crucial on all sides.

An obvious short-term casualty of Kosovo has been Mr Blair's drive to reform the European Commission. Following the debacle over the resignation of the Commission last month, he was keen to persuade other European leaders to adopt a far-reaching reform programme linked to the appointment of Romano Prodi as President. British ideas for improving internal financial controls are still on the table, but have made little progress because talks among European leaders are dominated by Kosovo. Little is now likely to happen until after the European elections in June — and the new Commission takes up office in September.

The domestic impact is clouded by the division of responsibility between Mr Blair and Gordon Brown. The Chancellor is now unchallenged chief executive on most economic, industrial and social issues. Peter Mandelson's resignation four months ago removed the only powerful independent voice, while John Prescott is largely absorbed in his sprawling department. Mr Brown has also taken charge of the Scottish election campaign, determining strategy and having close allies, such as Douglas Alexander, in day-to-day charge of co-ordination. If the latest polls are right, and the Scottish Nationalists are well beaten in ten days' time, that will be Mr Brown's triumph.

Downing Street insiders say that Mr Blair's preoccupation with Kosovo matters less both because departments are busy implementing decisions already taken and because there is now a lengthy period of "purdah" preventing new announcements ahead of the May 6 elections, and then the June 10 European elections. Mr Blair has often talked of 1999 being "the year of delivery". Departments have been set a lengthy list of targets under the public service agreements with the Treasury. But this requires constant prodding from the centre.

The intervention of the Prime Minister is often needed to overcome departmental inertia. This is just the time he should become personally involved in sorting out the mess over the future of London Underground. Even in those areas in which Mr Blair is particularly interested, such

as education and health, pressure from him is needed to maintain reform. For instance, the drive to bring in appraisal of teachers and performance-related pay is at a tricky point because of opposition from the unions.

Kosovo may, in time, also affect government spending plans. Fortunately, public finances are pretty healthy in the short term, so the immediate costs of the war should be absorbed without too many problems, once the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence have sorted out their usual spat about paying for replacement missiles and the like.

The problem is more in the long term. Provided the alliance does not fracture over the coming weeks, any lasting solution for Kosovo is likely to involve the commitment of a large number of troops there, as a peacekeeping and protection force. But two fifths of the Army are already on active service, an unsustainably high proportion for a peacetime professional force. So the size of the Army will almost certainly have to be increased.

Moreover, Britain and the rest of Europe are likely to have to spend very large sums rebuilding Kosovo and helping the economies of the surrounding countries. The danger with regional conflicts such as Kosovo is that they distract attention from global priorities. Bill Clinton has been strongly criticised by American businessmen for failing to reach an agreement with China over its admission to the World Trade Organisation during the recent visit by the Prime Minister. Zhu Rongji, integrating China into the world economy is a key Western priority, but Mr Clinton did not properly focus on the issues until too late. Germany and France have similarly feared that the West's relations with Russia might be a casualty of Kosovo.

Tony Blair has been worried for some time that Russia's default last summer and its failure to address its deep economic problems could produce an anti-democratic and aggressively nationalist leadership. These fears have, of course, been fuelled by Kosovo, even though Russia's warnings are more a sign of weakness than of strength.

Mr Blair argued in his Chicago speech on Thursday that the Cologne summit of leading industrial nations in June should adopt a package of trade, technical assistance and substantial financial help.

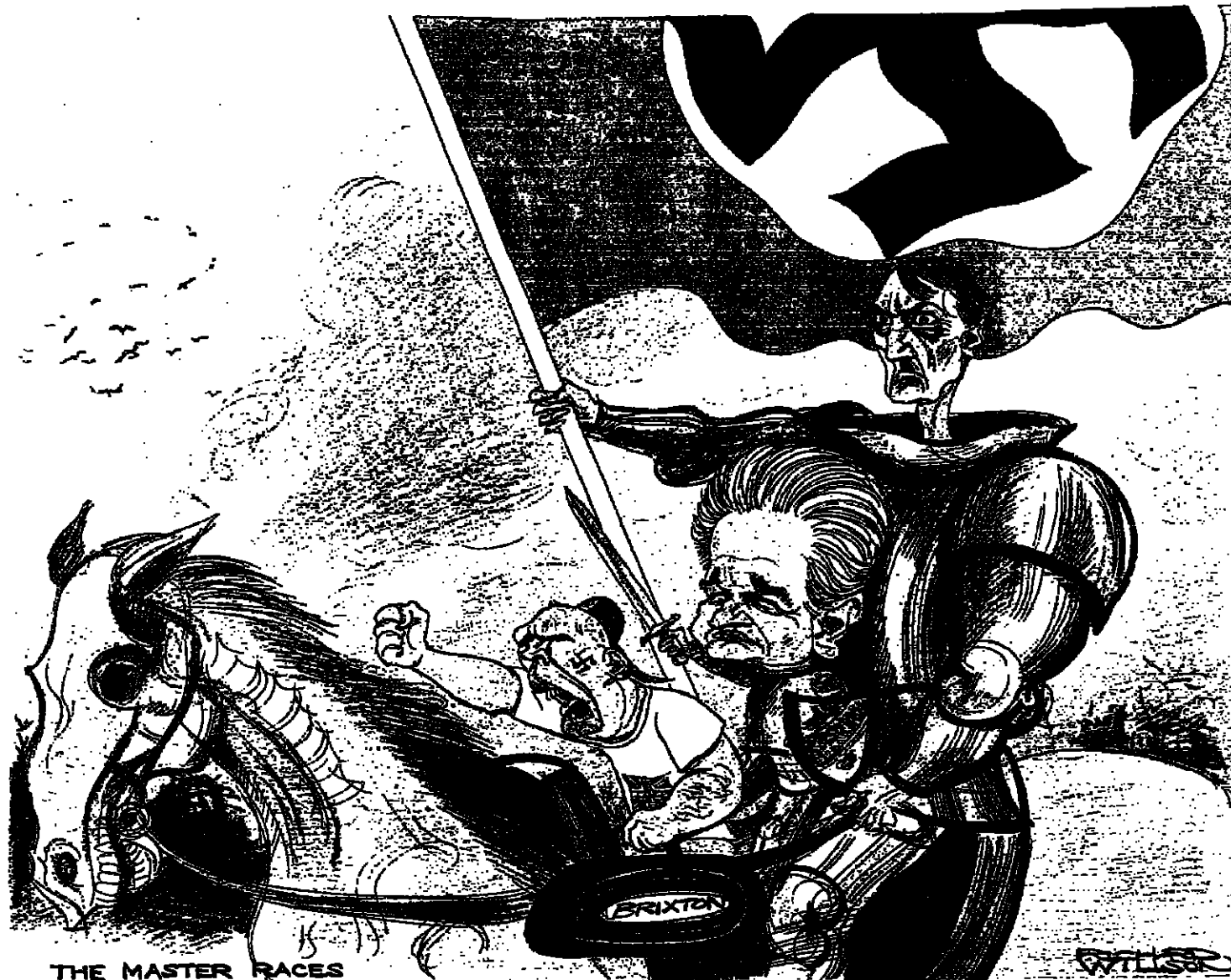
As Mr Blair argued, Kosovo is only the latest demonstration — others include the Asian financial crisis and transatlantic trade tensions — of increasing global interdependence. He has called for a new "doctrine of international community".

The euphoric days of the end of the Cold War are over. Surmounting these problems is going to take up much of the time of heads of government, as well as being more expensive for their taxpayers.

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Peter Riddell



THE MASTER RACES

Hatred past and future

If Nazism echoes from Kosovo to Brick Lane, racism goes even deeper

I think one has to take it further than Hitler; indeed we may fail to understand the racism that threatens the world's future if we personalise it too much on him. Yet I found Niall Ferguson's article in yesterday's *Sunday Telegraph* very persuasive; he linked the Columbine High School massacre, the Serbian ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and the Brixton bomb to the historic influence of Hitler.

Fifty years after his death, Hitler retains his hateful fascination. His personality plays a much larger part in the contemporary world debate than those of the victorious war leaders, Stalin, Churchill or the half-forgotten Roosevelt. The only other European leader to have retained a similar hold on the public imagination 50 years after his death was Napoleon.

The facts are clear enough. The high school massacre was carried out by neo-Nazi fanatics who exchanged "Hell Hitler" salutes with each other and adopted German phrases and trenchcoats as symbols of their Nazi views. They targeted at least one black student because he was black. The group that has claimed responsibility for the Brixton and Brick Lane bombings, Combat 18, apparently takes its name from Hitler's initials: A is the first letter of the alphabet and H is the eighth. The Balkans have a long history of ethnic cleansing; there is an inherent racism in the attitudes of the Serbs and the Albanians towards each other. Nato has used the comparison between Hitler and Milosevic as part of its propaganda.

We do not yet know precisely who planted the London bombs, but there is no reason to question the police assessment that these were racial attacks, nor is it unlikely that the bombs were made and planted by neo-Nazis. The bombs were exploded in areas of ethnic concentration at a time when they would injure or kill the largest possible number of people. Their aim must have been to terrorise the ethnic communities of these areas, and to worsen race relations.

Whether these bombs are the start of a sustainable campaign of urban terrorism, no one can yet tell. At the least they belong to the same group of racist crimes as the Stephen Lawrence murder, or the other racist assaults and murders that have occurred too frequently in recent years. Many of these incidents have attracted little attention, but they have spread fear and resentment.

The recruits to neo-Nazi and

racist groups come from the same people who form street gangs, engage in football hooliganism or get involved in fights outside pubs. They are not necessarily poor or unemployed, but many of them have criminal convictions or criminal associations. Some may belong to the ranks of the dropouts and the excluded, as, in his adolescence in Vienna, Hitler did.

Many are simply street bullies, who take into the street attitudes they have already shown in the playground. The Columbine High School killers were obviously intelligent, perhaps highly intelligent. The

anti-Semitism is the classic case of racial prejudice, and the Holocaust is the classic racist event of the 20th century.

No Jew ever believes that anti-Semitism has wholly disappeared. All Jews outside Israel, like all black or Asian people in Europe or America, have to live with the painful knowledge that there are people they meet or work with who feel an intrinsic hostility towards them. They know the little sneers that will be made, the assumptions of racial difference, the stereotyping, the exclusion. And they know how much worse has lain behind that, in

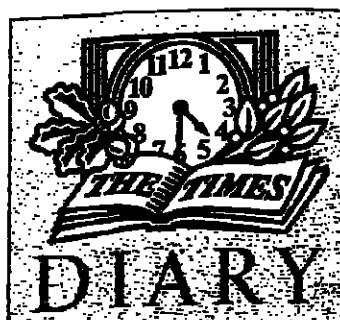
medieval British history, in modern European history. Jews do not forget the Holocaust, because they cannot afford to forget it. I suspect that most of them think of the Holocaust, for one reason or another, every day. Many think of it more often than that.

The best account of the Holocaust that I have read is Martin Gilbert's book. His first chapter does not open with the Wannsee Conference of January 20, 1942, at which the "final solution" was adopted; indeed, he reaches that conference only on page 280. He starts his book with a quotation from Martin Luther dating from 1543, almost 400 years earlier. This was Luther's "honest advice" on the treatment of Jews. "First their synagogues should be set on fire," their homes should be "broken down or destroyed", Jews should be "put under one roof, or in a stable, like Gypsies, in order that they may realise that they are not masters in our land". Jews should be put to earn their living "by the sweat of their noses", or should be stripped of their belongings "which they have extorted unscrupulously from us" and driven out of the country "for all time".

One does not think of Martin Luther, the courageous leader of the Reformation, in the same terms as one thinks of Milosevic, the Columbine High School killers, the London nail bombers, or indeed Hitler.



William Rees-Mogg



House guest

WITH customary sensitivity, the Oxford Union is to debate "This house believes that racism is inevitable". To lend intellectual force, John Tyndall, the chairman of the British National Party, will be among next month's speakers. From his illustrious party, Combat 18, a group that claimed responsibility for the Brixton bomb, reputedly sprang.

After last term's visit by Jerry Springer, the Union has acquired a taste for tawdry headlines. Tyndall appeared on BBC TV recently supporting repatriation: my man with the clip-on bow-tie at the Union says: "We will be more sceptical than on the hustings of the Isle of Dogs. The university police have been informed."

CORONARY-INDUCING antics in Soho, where Damien Hirst, the ageing enfant, has taken to prancing around naked. Regulars at the *Croucho* are allowed to peruse an album of photos depicting Hirst sans attire. Michael Wojas, from the adjoining Colony Rooms, is weary: "When Damien has had a few glasses next door, he runs in here and says, 'Michael, I'm going to take my clothes off.' He then parades around stark naked, shouting 'what do you think of my body?' I've seen it many times."

AFTER poetry became the new pop and gardening the new game, economics is to become the new erogenous zone. A young Cam-



bridge don (above) has won a record six-figure advance from Random House for a new book, teasingly titled *The Silent Takeover* (which bangs on about how global business rules our lives). Norcross Hertz, 31, promises to "make economics sexy". She has advised Boris Yeltsin on reform and helped Jordanian and Israeli ministers with the peace process. Literary types such as Ion Trevisan agree that it is the largest book deal ever won by an economist.

A TV spin-off is being negotiated with guest stars Bill Gates and George Soros. "Business is going to be the new superpower," Dr Hertz pants, warming to the new lingo.



THE gun attack on Beryl Bainbridge by her mother-in-law is the stuff of legend, but now the author says she had been subjected to a second assault from her relative, this time with a knife: "By this time I tell my children, 'when Granny reaches into her handbag to give you sweeties, drop to the floor.'"

THAT fashionable Soho joint Dell'Ugo (proprietor: Antony Worral Thompson) has just been graded "high risk" by environmental health inspectors at Westminster council. The restaurant, praised for its animal-loving ethos and frequented by Mo'Nawman, Jonathan Dimbleby and Downing Street sorts, was recently invaded by a giant shrew.

"I was strolling past when a shrew came flying out of the front door and a waiter scurried out after it," says a senior TV producer. The restaurant's manager responds: "We have gone through our routine inspection and there is no evidence of any rodent activity in the building." I'll stick to the Rioja.

POLITICS in Brussels have a new threat: Jeremy Paxman's baby brother. Giles Paxo has been appointed Head of Chancery in the Brussels Embassy, putting him in charge of political relations between the two nations. "He's a lot cleverer than I am — and a lot smoother," Paxo Sr assures me. "He's more of a diplomat." Jeremy admits that he was rejected by the Diplomatic Corps: "I was wisely seen as unsuitable." Nonsense, he is just what the FO needs.

JASPER GERARD

'Fifteen years ago there were no adverts and no products to advertise. A soft drink was a soft drink and there was only one word for it — water'

Happy milkmaids, fields of corn, golden light and lots of old men vaguely modelled on Leo Tolstoy. This is the surreal image of Russia presented in television ads. Quite how anybody expects people who actually live here to believe that there are robust, rosy-cheeked girls in embroidered shirts happily slopping milk from one pail to the next in some pastoral idyll outside the ring road, I cannot imagine.

Fifteen years ago there was none of this drivel. No adverts, no products to advertise, no spin. Cheese was cheese (in fact there were two sorts — yellow and white), and a soft drink was a soft drink. There was only one word for it — water. Anything non-alcoholic came under this name. You knew where you were.

Then, in 1990, a billboard went up in Pushkin Square. It was huge. On it was a little line-

drawing of a man holding a can. The caption, a ludicrously literal translation of the English, read: "TUP. More a jar of water than a way of life." People stood before it, squinting up in a desperate attempt to extract meaning. This was the start of advertising in Russia.

For at least two years, direct translations of foreign advertisements baffled the Russian populace. "Bounty — the enjoyment of paradise" did not disclose that there was something to eat beyond the palm-tree wrapper and not a sex aid, as the words suggested. But eventually the economic colonists got the hang of things and started running faintly 1950s-style ads of the "buy this, it does this and is better than that" type. This went down much better and Russians began to believe that there were differences between cans of drink, and the ways of life that went with

them. They were not quite as convinced as their Western counterparts, perhaps — Russians in general have a more finely developed sense of irony than we do — but they managed to have a Coke versus Pepsi war nonetheless.

Today, however, it's a new ball game. While the nightmarish "Papa? Nicole?" might not yet be appreciated, Western-style coffee ads are. Nowadays, the idea is to show affluent Russians enjoying the finer things in life. There is a fantastic one in which a girl lets a waiting lover leave messages asking where she is, as she enjoys her delicious cup of coffee in a faintly sexual way.

The thing is, where is she? She cannot be shown in some awful

Anna Blundy



Brezhnev high-rise, but the beautiful pre-revolutionary apartments here are not yet fashionable because old people are still dying in them. So this gorgeous woman lives in a ground-floor place that overlooks a forest and is always bathed in golden light. If by some amazing chance such a place exists, she would need bars on the windows and an armed guard nearby.

But best of all, there are now Russian companies running sophisticated ad campaigns. The trouble is, they have a Russian product to sell to Russians. This means that they cannot use beautiful Russian youngsters, looking Westernised and standing in a basketball court saying "I can chew it all day and it never

loses its taste", because that is still selling the West to Russia. They have to sell Russia.

The results are hilarious. This surreal twilight zone country has emerged — happy peasants in fields of gold meet affluent new Russians with cars and country houses. The most toe-curling of these involves a little boy on in-line skates, gliding along a pristine riverbank (no such thing around these parts and anyway, he would fall down a pothole in the pavement and do himself an injury), hand in hand with his Grandpa. I think the boy is wearing a Walkman around his neck and if not, he ought to be.

Grandpa has a long, grey beard and is wearing a belted peasant shirt and shoes made out of reeds. Presumably his son eschewed his simple way of life and became a contract killer or similar (in-line skates are expensive). Anyway, Grandpa is dron-

ing on about how the cathedrals are the heart of Russia (how he came out of Communism looking so well with such stringent religious beliefs is anyone's guess). The boy looks convinced. The strangest, though, is *Milaya Mila* (sweet Lyndyella), a pretty, buxom mother who goes out into the pale morning light, skips through the dew to her healthy, happy cows and comes home with pails of fresh milk for her eager, early-rising family.

What is so interesting about all these ads is that, without exception, they carefully omit the past 75 years. It is as though Russia leapt straight from Tolstoyan paradise to American dream without a glitch. Would that were true — and perhaps, with a carton of milk, a stick of chewing gum and an aromatic cup of coffee, it just might be.

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TIME FOR THE FRONTLASH

A new neo-Nazi threat based on old hatred

It is the result of fortune alone that no one has been killed in the two nail bomb attacks in London over the past ten days. Although the devices deployed in Brixton and now Brick Lane have been described as unsophisticated, the impact of such explosions at short range would be deadly. These assaults are designed to murder, maim and, above all, terrorise the neighbourhoods concerned. Whether they have been organised by Combat 18, the self-styled "Command Council of the White Wolves", or a different extremist faction is immaterial: they obviously represent a direct threat from the far Right and are clearly racist in motivation. The objective is to frighten Asian-British and black-British communities.

This is a serious criminal development and one to which the Metropolitan Police have rightly offered the maximum possible attention and resources. It is important, however, to remember how small the neo-Nazi Right is in this country and how feeble its political prospects are. These are violent acts prosecuted by those with no chance of even a modest degree of power. To intimate otherwise is only likely to offer warped pleasure to those responsible.

There is no evidence that these attacks represent some sort of "backlash" to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. This is sheer speculation that attempts to provide logical form for what is at root pure hatred. Organisations such as Combat 18 have been around in various forms for a number of decades. Their membership has never numbered more than a few hundred, most of whom spend relatively little time in their ranks. It is not clear that the Macpherson report has triggered any surge in their popularity.

These attacks may instead be the result of other factors. The ultra-Right in Britain has been engaged in one of its frequent rounds of infighting. The partial introduc-

tion of proportional representation has persuaded parts of the British National Party that it should enter the electoral arena more vigorously and "broaden its appeal" in an implausible attempt to replicate the relative success of the French National Front. This has prompted a realignment and possible radicalisation of the remaining strongly racist sector. The American militias have set an example for some of these individuals to follow. The Internet might have provided another means of disseminating information on the construction of crude devices.

The Metropolitan Police have an opportunity not only to arrest those concerned but also lift their standing in the eyes of ethnic minorities. The Macpherson report portrayed a police force seemingly unwilling to recognise a distinct category of racist crime. The reaction of the police over the past week has shown an enormous improvement on past insensitivity. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Alan Fry has dealt with these incidents in a direct manner and adopted a tone that conveys an appropriate sense of urgency. He deserves the widest possible co-operation from the public.

The nail bomb assailants wish not only to sow fear among minority communities but to drive a wedge between them and white residents. The best possible response is not only their swift arrest but an investigation that brings together people of different colours. An increase in the esteem in which the Metropolitan Police are held would be an obviously unintended but extremely welcome consequence of the current bombing campaign. There is not a white "backlash" either to the Lawrence report or to any other aspect of race relations in Britain — although the ultra-Right would love to foment one. As Lyndon Johnson once said, it is time for the "frontlash" to materialise.

WOOLF AT THE DOOR

A legal revolution today that will take some time to judge

Great expectations await the reforms to civil litigation that come into effect today. These changes are based on the recommendations made by Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, in 1996. Then they were hailed as the solution to the protracted and expensive court process which has needed a lawyer at every twist and turn. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, has continued this crusade, presenting these reforms as a key part of his broader campaign that includes the controversial Access to Justice Bill, in protest against which the Law Society has today taken out advertisements in the national press.

The expectations that the long-awaited Woolf reforms will transform civil justice into a quick and cost-effective remedy for disputes, accessible to all, are about to be put to the test. The principal theme is that of keeping as much litigation as possible out of the courts by encouraging alternative, or early, resolution of disputes. If the reforms succeed in this, then the costs and time spent in litigation will fall.

The chances of such success lie mainly in the hands of the judiciary. Judges have taken over the responsibility for moving litigation forward, replacing the lawyers acting in the case who were seen to have an interest in prolonging litigation in order to earn more fees. With this responsibility have come new powers to impose stiff penalties on those who prolong disputes. If judges use these powers effectively, litigants will find that fighting to the bitter end does not pay.

This will not happen overnight. These reforms are overhauling civil legal procedure and turning litigation on its head. Litigators will now be operating in new and unfamiliar territory. Under the new regime of disclosing facts and arguments in advance, the tactics of trial by ambush

will be relegated to the past. At the same time, the traditional lawyers' hammer and tongs of procedural rules — studied and practised for years — have been replaced with an entirely new set of instruments. Everybody will be a beginner, and lawyers will be treading cautiously at first, inquiring over every point, and possibly making court hearings themselves even slower than before.

The lawyers' complaint is that these changes have been rushed in too quickly. The legal professions are notoriously reluctant to change their ways. The Bar has been stalling for years over opening up its monopolistic restrictions on who can appear in court. Cynics might view the Law Society's latest attack on the cost-cutting Access to Justice Bill as an attempt to preserve its members' livelihoods.

There is, however, some justification for their protests. The Lord Chancellor has been hurrying his law reforms through Parliament. The Access to Justice Bill was presented to Parliament without the nuts and bolts of how its changes will actually work. Similarly, although Lord Woolf said that his reforms depended on the use of new administrative technology, this will not be in place for another year — seriously jeopardising judges' ability to process their new workload.

Transitional difficulties are, however, inherent to all programmes of change. It would be wrong to judge the effectiveness of these reforms on what may be a sticky start. Nor should the wrinkles and irregularities which will inevitably be found in the new procedure be taken as a sign that it does not work. Every system has its own set of problems. What counts is whether, in the long run, the speed and cost at which people can solve their legal problems improve.

SAFELY MATURE

The cheesemakers smell a Whitehall plot

Cheese and bureaucracy do not mix. As we report today, specialist cheesemakers fear that overpowering bureaucracy might force them out of business as quickly as over-ripe Camembert provokes exit from the larder. The plight of these small businessmen highlights the dilemma politicians face. At the whiff of a food scare ministers are quick to promise new regulations to lessen the risks of picking up a knife and fork. The result can be bankruptcy for producers, less choice for consumer and, in this case, the death of the runny cheese and the supremacy of the rubbery one.

Only a few weeks ago, the Government was praising the British cheese industry's products, describing them as "some of the finest of the world". Such plaudits are deserved. Britain's cheeseboard reflects the variety of the countryside, speckled with blues and reds, some smoked, others full fat, oozing with flavour.

Yet if the proposed new dairy hygiene rules are implemented, like a green field smothered by a motorway, this rolling calorific delight might disappear under the uniform monotony of slabs of processed cheese. Forcing small producers to send every batch of produce for microbiological testing, for instance, could make creating their delights unprofitable. The difference

between what ministers are saying and planning is, it appears, chalk and cheese. The cheesemakers smell the whiff of a Whitehall secret agenda, fearing that the regulations will mature into a ban on unpasteurised milk being used to make dairy produce. They argue that runny cheeses, made with untreated milk, cannot be made without bacteria, the enemy of the risk-conscious. Yet far from being beastly bacteria, these are on the side of the angels, fighting off listeria and making the cheese safe to eat. So forcing all producers to heat milk to 72°C — pasteurisation — might be counter-productive, destroying the cheese's natural defence mechanism and its smelly, unique creamy qualities.

Ministers would be guilty of gastronomic vandalism if they allowed their quest for food safety to destroy the variety of the cheeseboard. Flagrant abuses of hygiene regulations should carry a penalty, but do not warrant a wholesale change in those regulations. Eating cheese is a risky business, but so is crossing the road or having a bath. In 1996, 34 people aged between 15 and 64 died from food poisoning, six of whom had listeria, while 83 people died by falling off a chair or out of bed. Politicians should remember the principle of "caveat emptor". Most shoppers, like good Cheddars, are mature.

New legal rules 'a shambles'

From Professor I. R. Scott

Sir, On April 26, the Civil Procedure Rules 1998, implementing the reforms to the administration of justice recommended by Lord Woolf, come into force. Doubtless, the Lord Chancellor's publicity machine will be putting out a considerable amount of information extolling the virtues of the new system and emphasising in particular that it will provide faster and cheaper justice.

I doubt whether one will find any hint that the implementation of the new scheme is turning out to be a shambles.

It has been asserted that the Civil Procedure Rules (CPR) constitute a "new procedural code", written in plain English and that they will be readily understood by lawyer and lay-person alike. The truth is that, in many respects, the rules and their supplementing practice directions are an impenetrable mess.

Errors abound. Additions and changes have been made from week to week as "Woolf day" approached. Many appear to be very important. I say "appear to be" because some of the material put out recently is incomprehensible. Indeed, the further supplementing Practice Direction to Part 8 of the CPR (produced during the first week of this month) is one of the worst examples of procedural drafting I have seen.

As a result of the mismanaged implementation of the new scheme, judges, lawyers, court staff and litigants in person have been placed in an impossible position and recriminations are likely to be fierce. The civil justice system faces a long period of "muddling through", during which much time, effort and money will be spent on trying to operate and manage a procedural system that ought to have been got right well in advance of Woolf day.

Yours faithfully,
I. R. SCOTT,
Faculty of Law,
University of Birmingham,
Birmingham B15 2TT.
scottir@law.bham.ac.uk
April 23.

Performance and pay

From Dr Alan B. Shrank

Sir, Why do politicians pursue policies abandoned by those who have introduced them in the past? In trying to force performance-related pay on teachers (letters, April 12 and 19), why have they ignored commerce's disenchantment with this policy?

Those who work harder than their colleagues do not do so to receive the incentive, nor do they work harder once it is received. Some not recognised as worthy of extra reward become disillusioned and work less. Overall, the total effort is reduced. Most big enterprises have discovered this and abandoned the policy.

Performance-related pay occupies the valuable time of assessors. Favouritism and blackballing can influence decisions. Ill-feeling is engendered and damages team spirit. In teaching, team spirit is particularly important, since the quality of the school or college depends on the combined efforts of teachers in different subjects and at different levels. To select one or more teachers is invidious.

The key to rewarding workers is to pay them all an attractive salary. This results in higher-quality personnel and a high-quality service.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN B. SHRANK
(Vice-President, Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association),
20 Crescent Place,
Town Walls, Shrewsbury SY1 1TQ.
April 20.

Victims of strokes

From Mrs Ruth Hazeldine

Sir, The letter from the Chairman of Council of the Stroke Association and others (April 15) makes an eloquent plea for better provision for stroke patients within the health service. They write as academics and health professionals, while I write as the daughter and granddaughter of victims of stroke.

Anyone who has witnessed the suffering of a stroke victim, and experienced the harrowing sense of helplessness felt by relatives, friends and carers, would support this plea for stroke units to be included in the national priorities guidelines.

Yours sincerely,
RUTH HAZELDINE,
52 Jacksons Lane, N6 5SX.
April 16.

Maritime heroes

From Dr Stanley Solomons

Sir, Captain P. M. Adams states (letter, April 20) that Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci "crossed unknown oceans when the English were just able to ship wine up the coast from Bordeaux".

Got their priorities right, these old English navigators, it seems.

Yours sincerely,
S. SOLOMONS,
165 West Heath Road, NW3 7TT.
April 20.

Letters by fax to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Risk of a Balkan wasteland

From Mr George Thomas

Sir, There is not the least fig of legality to our assault on Yugoslavia (John Laughland's article, April 22). We seem simply to have declared that what we decide is right is right and is the law whether or not the UN or anyone else agrees, and that those countries that do not observe our law must expect to be punished. This century has produced several infamous leaders who thought like that.

At least we should have observed one other law, which is that if you do break the rules because of a "greater good" then you had better be sure some great good comes of it. So far our interference has been a disaster and it might seem the situation could not be worse. But, for once, do we not have a duty to think this through? Will reducing Serbia, outrageous though its behaviour has been, into yet another Balkan wasteland really create a better situation than the one we have today?

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE THOMAS,
17 Campden Hill Square, W8 7JY.
April 22.

From the Director of the Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom

Sir, I do not dispute in any way the rights of Alice Mahon (report and letter, April 21) to exercise her conscience in an independent way as a Labour MP. I do know from personal experience from a visit I made to South Vietnam as a Member of Parliament in 1968 that anything you wrote — as I did for the press — exercising an independent judgment, was nevertheless used unscrupulously by both the South Vietnamese Government and Ho Chi Minh regime.

Although heavily criticised by some members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, I did not regret my visit. A number of newspapers at the time were interested in sponsoring my visit, which I refused. On arrival in Saigon, the South Vietnamese Government arranged my hotel; however, after a short period of time I moved and stayed with the British chargé d'affaires.

I think Alice Mahon made an error of judgment in accepting an invitation to visit Belgrade — including financial backing from a newspaper — when she might have known that her visit would have the effect of strengthening the Belgrade regime's propaganda.

I agree with her that the British public has the right to know the effect of the Nato bombings on the Serbian people. That could be simply rectified

if Belgrade permitted free and unfettered press access.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN LEE WILLIAMS,
Director, Atlantic Council of the United Kingdom,
Atlantic House,
8a Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN.
April 21.

From Mr Edwin Roth

Sir, Clare Short is totally correct and justified in likening certain Labour MPs to those Britons who wanted to appease Hitler in the Thirties (report, April 21).

As a foreign correspondent, I was working in Israel during the Bosnian War when a demonstration against Milosevic's ethnic cleansing of Muslims was held in an Arab town there. To everybody's surprise, one participant was Professor Shevah Weiss, then the Speaker of Israel's parliament, an Orthodox Jew. "I came to this Muslim demonstration because I am an expert on ethnic cleansing," he said. "I am the only survivor of my family. All the others were ethnically cleansed by Hitler in Auschwitz."

Yours sincerely,
EDWIN ROTH,
20 Arkwright Mansions,
Finchley Road, NW3 6DE.
April 22.

From Mr R. Luta

Sir, The President and the four Vice-Presidents of the English Centre of International PEN wrote that: "Before Nato bombs began to fall, there was an active and vocal opposition to the tyrannical regime of Slobodan Milosevic with its vile policy of slaughter and ethnic cleansing of the Kosovo Albanians" (letter, April 20).

I was appalled to read this from people who lead such an institution. If this is not spin, or pro-Serb propaganda, it is ignorance at best. I come from Kosovo, and by God, I wish I knew there had ever been a gathering of at least a few Serbs in Belgrade to express any kind of opposition to what the Milosevic regime was doing to the Albanians.

I would kindly ask Ms Billington and the signatories of the letter to send me any information to substantiate such a claim, if they have any.

Sincerely yours,
R. LUTA,
120 Merton Mansions,
Bushey Road,
Raynes Park, SW20 8DG.
ragip@luta.freemove.co.uk
April 20.

Poverty in South Africa

From Mr Julian Charlton

The brutalisation of the police in South Africa (report, April 21, early editions) is a result not of the recent crime wave but of the apartheid era.

I visited South Africa in 1996 to make a television film on developments there. We went to townships, met aid workers and witnessed vistas of extreme poverty that barely seemed possible. Imagine the recent television images of the camps for Albanian refugees and multiply the number of refugees by the factor of a thousand.

There are literally millions of people living so far below the poverty line in South Africa that they do not even show up on the national register. In addition, I believe, they have been systematically terrorised by the authorities for decades.

When Western politicians talk about the need for jobs and housing it is a standard pre-election promise. When South African politicians talk about the same thing it is a matter of national security. What South Africa needs now is not a better police force but a humanitarian aid mission on a massive scale.

Yours sincerely,
JULIAN CHARLTON,
Newtown Lodge,
Blackrock, Co Dublin.
knuttel@iol.ie
April 21.

Millennium bug

From Dr Godfrey Harverson

Sir, I have newly arrived from our hospital computer network my report of a recent diagnostic investigation. It bears the date 31 Dec 40.

The monitor gives the year in full as 1840, precisely 100 years before I was born. Could this be an early sighting of the Y2K bug?

Yours,
GODFREY HARVERSON
(Consultant radiologist),
Broomfield Hospital,
Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7ET.
gharverson@compuserve.com
April 23.

Back to front

From Mr Frank Halford

Sir, On page 7 of today's Times, you report that men read their newspapers and magazines from back to front. What nonsense, I thought, and then realised I still had another six pages to read.

Yours truthfully,
FRANK HALFORD,
91 Worin Road, Shenfield,
Brentwood, Essex CM15 8JN.
April 19.

Dyke 'disqualified' as new BBC chief

From Sir Paul Fox

Sir, It is inconceivable that the BBC would have asked me to return as Managing Director, BBC Television, had I, during my time at Yorkshire Television, made any financial contributions to a political party.

A decade on, nothing has changed. The BBC decided that Melvyn Bragg, one of our most gifted broadcasters, could not continue to host *Start the Week* on Radio 4 because of his well-known links with Tony Blair (report, July 8, 1998).

Although Greg Dyke is a charismatic and talented figure in television, he has disqualified himself from being a serious candidate for the job of Director-General and Editor-in-Chief of the BBC (leading article, April 23; letters, April 20, 21 and 23). The fact that his financial contributions to Labour are widely known and that he would somehow "balance" Sir Christopher Bland, the Chairman and one-time CLC Conservative councillor, is irrelevant.

Even in 1999, the BBC cannot bend the rules.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL FOX
(Controller, BBC1, 1967-73; Managing Director, BBC Television, 1988-91),
c/o 10 Charterhouse Square,
London, EC1M 6LQ.
April 25.

Digital TV

From the Chief Executive of Channel 5

Sir, The leaders of commercial television who wrote to you (April 21) deploring the prospect of a digital supplement to the licence fee seem prepared to sacrifice the long-term public interest in the welfare of the BBC for their own short-term economic ends. They all have a substantial stake in the success of digital television, but seem unwilling to acknowledge the important and growing role the BBC plays in ensuring the public appeal of digital offerings.

We are told that the BBC is investing 10 per cent of the licence fee — £200 million per annum — in digital infrastructure and services. The BBC's own free-to-air services (News24, Choice, Learning and Parliament), together with joint ventures such as UK Horizons and new, online offerings, will play a significant part in attracting digital customers. Do the signatories to the letter expect these services to be provided indefinitely at the expense of all licence-fee payers for the benefit of the digital minority (and, of course, themselves)?

There are precedents for the proposed supplement. Television was originally funded by a separate licence fee, over and above radio. Colour television was introduced in 1967 and a supplementary licence fee for colour the following year. It would be hard to argue that it inhibited the spread of colour; the extra investment by the BBC in new programming helped colour licences to outstrip black-and-white ones within eight years.

The signatories display little confidence in their own offering, little understanding of the past and little sympathy for the long-term role of the BBC in the digital age in suggesting that a £250 a month charge to fund the BBC's initiatives would seriously inhibit the transfer to digital.

There can be a serious debate about the scale and nature of the BBC's digital investment. However, to imagine that, for ever and a day, the BBC will be funded by a single, undifferentiated, flat-rate lump sum per household for all the services it offers would be to inhibit the BBC's transfer to digital and (though they may not realise it) the businesses of the signatories themselves.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ELSTEIN,
Chief Executive,
Channel 5 Broadcasting Ltd,
22 Long Acre, WC2E 9LY.
April 21.

Dress non-sense?

From Mr Duncan Williamson

Sir, I wonder what conclusions we can draw from the situation in which a high-profile husband (William Hague) is reportedly outshone when his wife simply wears a dress, seeming merely to emulate and possibly outshine the wife of another high-profile husband (Tony Blair) who wore a similar dress a year earlier ("Flora's sari puts her back in the limelight", report, April 22)?

Yours faithfully,
DUNCAN WILLIAMSON,
18 Abbott Road,
Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 2DT.
April 23.

Out of this world

From Mr Martin Todd

Sir, In the report "Branson plans to go into orbit" (April 22) I was somewhat puzzled by the statement that travellers will be charged "for a return fare of about £60,000". Does this mean that a single ticket is available?

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN TODD,
28 Devenish Crescent, Enniskillen,
Co Fermanagh BT74 4RB.
todd.family@swiftnet.net
April 22.

Sport letters, page 33

OBITUARIES

ARTHUR BOYD

Arthur Boyd, AC, OBE, artist, died in Melbourne on April 24 aged 78. He was born on July 24, 1920.

It has been said that, after Picasso, Arthur Boyd's oeuvre is the most massive and varied in the history of 20th-century painting. His chief theme was the divine frenzy of love.

If recognition of his artistic stature was slow in Europe despite his huge output, it was partly because he painted pictures with subject matter when abstraction was in the ascendant, and partly because his combination of quiet modesty, acute intelligence and passionate art was not for the salon or cocktail party. He lived compactly in the satisfying circle of an artistic family, and yet he travelled constantly. He was a rare 20th-century visionary who dealt with great themes, both personal and public, without ever losing his sense of place.

Arthur Merric Bloomfield Boyd was born in Murrumbidgee, then just outside Melbourne, to a family which had emigrated from Britain in the early 19th century, and which has now produced four generations of artists, writers and musicians. His father, Merric, was one of Australia's first studio potter. His mother, a painter and Christian Scientist, provided an artistic and religious upbringing for her five children, who all became painters, sculptors or potters.

Boyd left primary school at 14 to work in a paint factory owned by an uncle, and briefly attended evening classes in art at the National Gallery of Victoria. In 1936, while living with his grandfather, himself a painter, he began to paint landscapes, well enough to have his first exhibition at 17. These were mainly broadly painted Impressionist views in grey-blues and ochres, but there was already a boldness of attack which was soon to become more Expressionist.

During the 1940s, some of the most urgent, passionate, imaginative and humane art anywhere in the world was being painted in Melbourne, Australia. It was as if only at the furthest distance from the bloodshed in Europe could the world's agonies be handled. The year 1937 had been crucial. In that year, Joel Bergner, a 17-year-old European Jew who had lived in the Warsaw ghetto and who painted in a style influenced by Picasso's Blue Period, arrived in Australia as a refugee. The Russian Cossack Danila Vassiliev, who had fought in the First World War, reached Melbourne by way of the Black Sea, India, China, Queensland, then Brazil, the West Indies, England, France, and Spain; the self-taught Albert Tucker was picking up his own style of Expressionism; Noel Counihan was painting urban scenes with a strong social content, and John Perceval was painting psychological dramas.



Arthur Boyd in Hampstead in 1967, at work on the last of 35 large pictures about King Nebuchadnezzar, for the Adelaide Arts Festival

All these men, along with Boyd, came together to produce what has become known as the "Angry Decade", 1937-47, throwing the agonies of a suffering world at an Australian society that was still trying to remain isolationist.

Boyd joined the Australian Army Service Corps in 1939, working in Melbourne and Bendigo as a cartographic field surveyor until 1944, but managed to participate in the exhibitions of the Contemporary Art Society from 1942 to 1946. Meanwhile he was developing a personal style, combining Surrealism, symbolism, social realism and Expressionism to create a world of lovers and cripples, beasts and monsters, in scenes of suffering, passionate love and redemption.

After leaving the Army he married Yvonne Lennie, a former art student. In 1945, and set up a pottery business with his sister's husband, the painter John Perceval. In the same year the Myer Gallery requested the removal of one of Boyd's pictures, *Two Lovers: The Good Shepherd*, from the Contemporary Art Society Exhibition on grounds of obscenity.

He now began a profound study of the art of Bosch, Bruegel and Rembrandt, including not only their subject matter and composition but also the technical beauties of their paintwork. With tempera and oil, sometimes over chalk grounds, and with an abundance of precise detail and mellow radiance of colour, he painted *The Mockers* and *The Mourners* in 1945, and in 1946-47 produced a *tour de force* of Bruegelian and Bosch-like breadth, *The Mining Town*.

Less tendentious than his paintings of religious themes, sexual passion, guilt and betrayal were his Berwick and Wimmera landscapes of 1948-49, which won him the respect of Australia's cultural establishment. A series of murals for his uncle, the novelist Martin Boyd, were followed in 1950 by work on ceramic tiles, and sculpture such as *Saul and David* of 1953.

In 1951 Boyd travelled to Central

Australia, where the poverty and dereliction of the Aboriginal people of the interior corresponded to the maimed and deprived creatures who already peopled his psychodramas of the redemptive powers of love. The trip had a strong impression on Boyd, as he showed in a series of paintings from 1956 entitled *Love, Marriage and Death of a Half-Caste* (often known as the *Bride* series). These Chagall-like allegories feature a part-Aboriginal stockman, who is joined by a naked, spectral bride in a forest clearing. The first cycle of paintings on this theme was shown at the Australian Galleries in 1959, and filmed by Patrick Ryan and Tim Burstall, bringing Boyd to international attention.

After taking part in the Antipodean Exhibition that year, Boyd left for London with his family. They rented a house in Hampstead Lane as a base for touring Europe, and the next year, 1960 — the year that Sidney Nolan exhibited his *Leda* and the *Swan* series at the Matisse

Gallery — Boyd had his first London show, at the Zwemmer Gallery. The catalogue had a foreword by Bryan Robertson, who was to advance Boyd's reputation with his exhibition of *Recent Australian Painting* at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1961, and a full retrospective of Boyd's work at the same influential address in 1962.

Boyd next conquered the theatre. A commission for decor and costumes for Stravinsky's ballet *Renard* at the Edinburgh Festival and later at Sadler's Wells was followed in 1963 by stage designs for the ballet *Electra*, with music by Malcolm Arnold and choreography by Robert Helpmann, at Covent Garden and later at the Met in New York.

Like his close friend Sidney Nolan, with whom he was often linked, Boyd found Europe a great stimulus. The feeling of distance which had launched the "Angry Decade" in Australia was for a time reversed, and Boyd vigorously pursued his Australian themes in Britain.

Then, after several years devoted to the *Half-Caste* cycle, his erotic fantasies of star-crossed, wind-blown lovers — as if in some underworld of the shades from Virgil or Dante — took on the myths and metamorphoses of antiquity and the Renaissance. In 1966 he began the *Nebuchadnezzar* series; in 1968 he made lithographs on the theme of *St Francis of Assisi*, and a collection of tapestries and pastels on the same theme followed.

During the 1970s he published etchings, lithographs and aquatints on Lysistrata and Narcissus, and worked on tapestries of *Nebuchadnezzar*. He also illustrated Peter Porter's *Jonah* (1973) and *The Lady and the Unicorn* (1975), and Janet Dalley's translations of Pushkin's *Fairy Tales*.

All these works were punctuated by exhibitions at Fischer Fine Art in London, and long and frequent visits to Australia for an increasing number of exhibitions. In 1973 Boyd bought an estate on the Shoalhaven River, where he founded an expanding family enclave, and which became the inspiration for many subsequent sketches and paintings. In Europe, Boyd's base from 1975 was Ramsholt, near Woodbridge in Suffolk, and he also acquired a house near Palaio in Tuscany. Although he loved to travel, he was terrified of flying, and always insisted on going by ship.

Responses to the landscape and natural events around Shoalhaven took more of Boyd's attention in the 1980s, when he acquired another house on the Shoalhaven River, at Bundanon, near Nowra, New South Wales. In 1984 he received a commission for a tapestry for the Parliament House Auditorium in Canberra, and another to paint 16 canvases for the foyer of the State Theatre at the Victoria Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Meanwhile, his paintings were growing larger, fiercer in colour and broader in their references to contemporary society. This meant that an artist who had long swum against the tide of fashion found himself right at the centre of the younger New Expressionists in the 1980s.

In 1993 Boyd and Sir Sidney Nolan (his brother-in-law since 1976) gave their extensive properties at Bundanon to the Australian public for the creation of a national arts and environment centre. The landscape, including Pulpit Rock, features in many of Boyd's late paintings, and the trust provides places for artists in residence. It is also developing exchange programmes, especially between England, Asia and Australia.

Arthur Boyd was appointed OBE in 1970, AO in 1979 and AC in 1992. He was voted Australian of the Year in 1995.

He is survived by his wife, and by their son and two daughters, all three of whom are painters.

SIR JAMES COBBAN

Sir James Cobban, CBE, former Headmaster of Abingdon School, died on April 19 aged 88. He was born on September 14, 1910.

JAMES COBBAN was one of the last of a generation of headmasters who devoted most of their working lives to a single school. Having learnt much about leadership and administration during the war, he also made a wide contribution to public life.

Born in Scunthorpe, James Macdonald Cobban won a scholarship from Pocklington School to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he took a first in both parts of the Classical Tripos (with the highest mark except for his contemporary, Enoch Powell) and was both Thirlwall Medalist and Gladstone Prize man.

He taught at King Edward VI School, Southampton, and at Dulwich College before serving in the Directorate of Military Intelligence and becoming, as a Lieutenant-Colonel, a Staff Officer with the Control Commission in Germany. After the war he returned briefly to Dulwich, before becoming headmaster of Abingdon, then an undistinguished school of 250 pupils, in 1947. By the time "The Boss" retired in 1970, it had more than 700 pupils.

Referred to by one general as the best staff officer he had ever had, Cobban arrived at Abingdon with something of a reputation as an administrator. It was said that the filing system he introduced to the school was based on what he



had observed of German military efficiency. Under him, the area of the school's buildings doubled, and when the quarter-century was celebrated in 1963, Abingdon had become one of the major direct grant schools in the country.

He needed little sleep, and his energy and ideas never flagged. He remained in the forefront of curriculum development, with innovations in maths, science, classics and music. And he understood the claim to greater freedom among pupils in the 1960s.

He always knew every boy in the school, and took even the youngest seriously. He was the favourite subject of his own jokes, and happily played up

his most easily caricatured mannerisms. Though small in stature, he had utter self-assurance and was quite unselfconscious, whether observed in his dressing gown returning from his morning swim, or talking whole-school assembly in the open air on a cold winter's day, or teaching Greek with a combination of *Moussouri* and *Touvoorou* (music and movement) which would have delighted Plato — and even pleased the Third Form.

Retirement made little odds to him, as he continued to be of service. He was co-chairman of the Direct Grant Schools Joint Committee and deputy chairman of the Schools' Governing

Bodies Association; chairman of the governors of St Helen's, Abingdon, and a governor of Stowe, Wellington College and others. He chaired the Abingdon bench of magistrates and served on the Oxfordshire Magistrates' Courts Committee, and that of the Thames Valley Police Authority.

He represented the Diocese of Oxford in the House of Laity on the General Synod and was vice-president of the Oxford Diocesan Synod, as well as chairman of the Laity Challenge Fund. He was one of those responsible for selecting ordinands for the Church of England and was himself a lay reader. He officiated in a group of six Dorset parishes from 1986 to 1997.

Cobban, who had become a JP in 1950, became Deputy Lieutenant of Berkshire in 1966 and, under reorganisation, of Oxfordshire in 1974. He was appointed CBE in 1971 and knighted in 1982. In 1986 a party was held to celebrate 50 years of continuous publication of his Latin reader *Civis Romanus*, which he wrote with a colleague at Dulwich and which had sold nearly half a million copies (paying for the education of four daughters). The two authors and the original commissioning editor were all present.

He married Lorna Marlow in 1942, but she died in 1961, and their only son also died when very young. His sister gave up her job as a primary school headmistress to support him at Abingdon. He is survived by her and his four daughters.

LORD KILLANIN

Lord Killanin, former President of the International Olympic Committee, died yesterday aged 84. He was born on July 30, 1914.

MICHAEL MORRIS, 3rd Baron Killanin, was a versatile Irishman who achieved distinction in several different spheres, not least as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in one of its most turbulent periods, 1972-80.

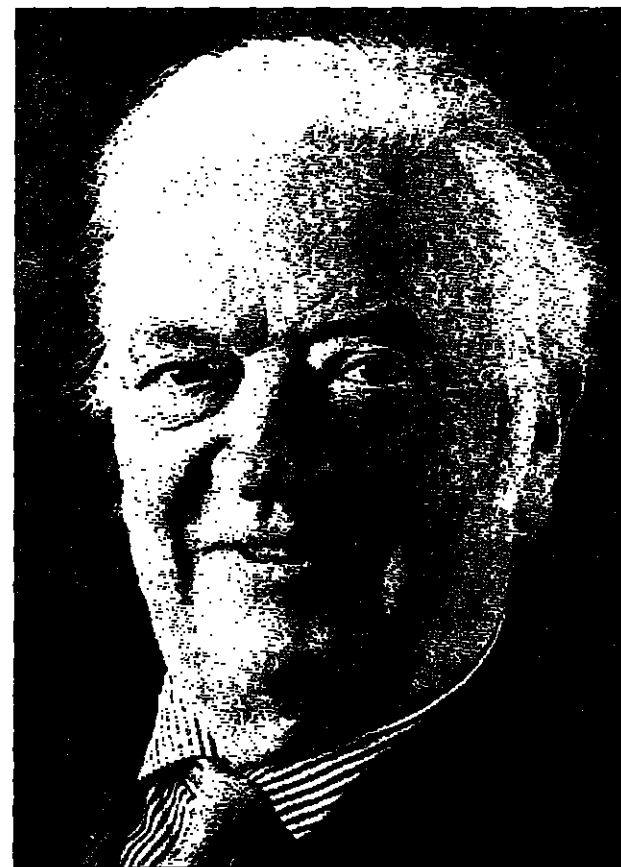
He came from an old Roman Catholic landed and merchant family, long settled in Galway. His grandfather had been Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, and later a law lord who was created a hereditary peer. His father was killed in action in 1914, so Killanin succeeded as a peer while still a minor in 1927 on the death of his uncle.

He was educated at Eton, Magdalene College, Cambridge (where he was president of Footlights) and the Sorbonne. As he had edited *Varsity*, it was a natural progression for him to enter journalism. He was a war correspondent in the Sino-Japanese War, and later a lively political columnist with the *Daily Mail*. He was also one of the authors of *Four Days*, which described the reaction in various capital cities to the Munich Crisis.

During the war he served with the Queen's Westminster and took part in the D-Day landings. Afterwards he married Sheila Dunlop, and returned to Ireland. He was determined not to be separated from the mainstream of Irish life. His few speeches in the Lords had shown him sympathetic to Irish nationalist aspirations.

He worked on many committees, was a director of several companies, and produced a number of films with John Ford. For many years he was president of the Irish Club in London, and he also helped to promote the Dublin Festival Theatre. He also found time to write. His book on Godfrey Kneller, while not a scholarly contribution, served to revive interest in a figure overshadowed by his contemporaries Gainsborough and Reynolds. Killanin also collaborated with Michael Duignan on *The Shell Guide to Ireland*.

As an Olympic administrator he displayed considerable diplomatic gifts. He was president of the Irish Olympic Council from 1950, and a member of the IOC from 1952. In 1966 he became chief of



protocol, and two years later he rose to be vice-president. He stood for a modern, flexible approach (not least on amateur status) and his patriotic background helped him to push through reforms. His philosophy was to put the competitor first and to ensure that the Games were open to the maximum possible number of athletes. What he really wanted was a reduction of nationalism in the Games, and he was for a long time a lone voice advocating the abolition of flags and anthems. He was also a consistent advocate of the admission of China, which he finally achieved.

It had been thought that Killanin's predecessor as President of the IOC, Avery Brundage, who held office for 20 years, had had a difficult time, but Killanin's experience, though spanning only eight years, was even more trying. He hardly had time to savour his election to the presidency at Munich in 1972 before the Games there were marred by the tragedy that overtook the Israeli team at the hands of the Palestinian guerrillas — an early reminder of his unenvying responsibilities.

Later that year a crisis arose over the 1976 Winter Olympics, when Denver, the city originally chosen, withdrew. This was unprecedented and could have presented the new President

with an insoluble problem had the Austrians not come to the rescue with an offer to hold the Games again at Innsbruck, where the 1964 Winter Olympics had been held. Nevertheless, 1976 was a severe trial because little went right for the Montreal Games that summer. Industrial action left the preparations seriously behind schedule and created doubts about whether the city could be ready in time. In the end all was well so far as the facilities were concerned, but two political developments offered new threats.

Late in the day, the Canadian Government refused to accept citizens of Taiwan under the official Olympic name of the Republic of China, in conformity with United Nations transfer of recognition to Beijing. The Taiwanese were supported by the US, which at one time threatened to withdraw. Neither side would yield, and the Games went ahead without them. The US did not go through with its boycott, but an even bigger one took effect. Many African nations and their sympathisers packed their bags and left as a protest at the admission of New Zealand, who had incurred displeasure by sharing a rugby tour with South Africa.

Before the Games of 1980 came round, Killanin achieved one cherished ambition, when a formula was found for the readmission of China to the Olympic movement. Beijing dropped its precondition that it would rejoin only if Taiwan were excluded as a separate entity, based on the argument that Taiwan was a part of China and that its citizens should compete under the mainland flag. The IOC decided to recognise two separate Chinese Olympic Committees.

But Taipei remained hostile to this new arrangement and stubbornly sent a team to Lake Placid in the name of the Republic of China rather than the new title wished upon it, that of the Chinese Taipei National Olympic Committee. When its team was refused admission to the Olympic Village, Taiwan successfully sought court approval for the ruling to be overturned.

Lake Placid duly lodged an appeal, supported by the US, which claimed that if the judgment were allowed to stand, the American position in international sport would be compromised. The Americans' attitude at Lake Placid had changed diametrically from that at Montreal.

But all this paled beside the problems presented by Moscow in the summer of 1980. There had been criticism of the decision in 1974 to award the Games to the Soviet capital. Indignation overflowed into anger when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan at the end of 1979. Personal indignation was supplanted by presidential hostility in America and expressions of severe disapproval elsewhere, notably in Britain and Australia.

President Carter's efforts to prevent an American team from competing in Moscow were successful, but Margaret Thatcher's attempt to keep Britain in step were a failure, with the exception of a few sports of Conservative flavour. In all more than 80 of the 150 or so nations in the Olympic movement competed in Moscow. Of the remainder, about 40 supported the boycott and others stayed away for other reasons.

Killanin had averted the worst, and realised his ambition of bringing China back into the Games, as well as improving the IOC finances, but his touching faith in the power of sport to promote peace was, in the end, disappointed. His memoirs, *My Olympic Years*, were particularly critical of Jimmy Carter.

He is survived by his wife, three sons and a daughter.

BRITISH GRIP ON HILL 60

During the last few days the area south-east of Ypres has continued to be the centre of interest, and the narrative of the fighting there will be given up to the night of Wednesday, the 21st.

Hill 60, of which the Germans held the crest, was seamed with innumerable trenches and saps. At 7pm on April 17 seven mines were fired simultaneously under the German trenches. The interval that elapsed before our assault took place was to use the words of one soldier — "like a transformation scene." Trenches, parapets, sandbags disappeared and the whole surface of the ground assumed strange shapes — here torn into huge craters, there forming mounds of fallen debris.

As the reports of explosions died away, and while the dense columns of smoke and dust still hung in the air, our men, led by their officers, sprang from the trenches and rushed across the intervening space of some 40 to 60 yards between

ON THIS DAY

April 26, 1915

For five days a battle raged for possession of a small hill on the Ypres front. Attack and counter-attack followed in quick succession to gain a piece of land about 250 yards by 200. Hill 60 was finally taken by the British but with heavy losses.

our line and the gaping craters before them, the front covered by the attack being only some 250 yards in length.

Many of the German soldiers were surprised in their shirt sleeves. Stunned by the explosions, suddenly subjected to a rain of hand-grenades, thrown by our bombing parties, they gave way to panic. Cursing and shouting, they were falling over one another and fighting in their hurry to gain the exits into the

communication trenches; and some of those in rear, maddened by terror, were driving their bayonets into the bodies of their comrades in front.

Of all this our infantry had but a momentary glimpse before they fell upon the enemy with the bayonet, burst through the maze of trenches, poured into the craters, and pressed on down the communication trenches until at last they were stopped by barricades defended by bomb throwers. The first line of trenches over the front assaulted was captured in a few minutes, with little difficulty, and 15 prisoners fell into our hands. But it was then that the real struggle began, for the Germans quickly recovered from their surprise.

From our line the hill is a salient exposed to fire from three sides, and it was only a few moments before the German gunners took advantage of this fact and opened fire. Soon the whole position became obscured in the smoke of bursting shells. Meanwhile our batteries had begun to support the attack, and a terrific artillery fire was maintained far into the night.

Lightning strikes

Flintoff in electric form for Lancashire

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True lies

A little leeway on the fairway

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Never shy but retiring

Matt Dickinson on Atkinson's farewell

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TIMES SPORT

MONDAY APRIL 26 1999



Six-shooters: Kanu, left, and Winterburn celebrate one of Arsenal's half-dozen goals against Middlesbrough

Wenger's ruthless troops go gunning for United

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THERE has been much talk in recent weeks from the players of Manchester United about the importance of sending messages to their rivals with emphatic performances, messages of invulnerability that gradually drain the opposition of all hope. As he stood in one of the wide corridors at the Riverside Stadium early on Saturday evening, Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, smiled when he was reminded of what they had been saying.

His side had just subjected Middlesbrough to a humiliating rout. In the process, they had leapt to the top of the FA Carling Premiership for the first time this season. Wenger could afford to feel pleased with himself. "Three points is the best message you can give," he said.

Going by that criterion, United suffered a rare breakdown in communications yesterday. Their failure to beat a spirited, skilful Leeds United side at Elland Road was not a bad result, but, taken together with the sheer brilliance of Arsenal's 6-1 demolition of Middlesbrough, it seemed to throw the championship race wide open again.

United trail the champions by a point and even though

their fate is still in their control because they have a game in hand, even though they are still the bookmakers' favourites, Arsenal will hold the psychological advantage of being top for the next five days at least. In United's favour, they will not face opponents of Leeds's calibre again, while Arsenal still have to play O'Leary's side and endure the lottery of a North London derby at White Hart Lane.

If Chelsea had won yesterday afternoon, rather than trudging to a dull goalless draw away to Sheffield Wednesday, they might have re-entered the race. Now, though, they have retreated even further into the shadows.

"There are still a lot of twists and turns to come," Ferguson said after he had seen Dwight Yorke spurn a late chance to beat Leeds, "but this is a good result for Arsenal and Chelsea. It will have given them much more hope. It will go right down to the wire now."

The way that Arsenal played on Saturday suggests that Ferguson might be right. They were irresistible. Kanu, their Nigeria forward, was so inspired that it will be hard to leave him out, even for Dennis Bergkamp. One of his goals,

LEEDS UNITED 1 MAN. UTD. 1

12:58 21:43



Slow on the draw: Ferguson ponders Manchester United's failure to retake the Premiership lead at Elland Road yesterday

an outrageously extravagant back-heel from 12 yards, almost defied belief. His poise and positional awareness have brought yet another dimension to an Arsenal attack that was not exactly short of weapons in the first place.

In defence, the champions were as relentlessly parsimonious as ever. Steve Bould, deputising for the suspended Martin Keown, produced a faultless display that underlined the standards that Keown and Tony Adams have to set in order to keep him on the bench. Even at 35, Bould would be a starting member of any other side in the country. Even Manchester United.

It is also significant that since their epic defeat at the hands of United in their FA Cup semi-final replay, Ar-

senal's blitz of goals against Wimbledon and Middlesbrough has cut United's goal difference advantage to one instead of 11.

Arsenal are at their most relentless now, unforgiving and brutal, and United will have to shake off their fatigue and rediscover the *joie de vivre* that sent them dancing past Juventus if they are to hold them off. Not only did Ferguson's team look jaded against their bitter

rivals from Yorkshire yesterday, they also finished the game with an epidemic of injuries that does not bode well for their ability to cope with the demands of a punishing championship run-in.

In the aftermath of the 1-1 draw, secured when Andy Cole scored a second-half equaliser to rub out Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink's goal for Leeds, Ferguson orchestrated a mass withdrawal of his players from international duty.

Paul Scholes and Andy Cole were pulled out of the England squad that travels to Hungary today. Jaap Stam, whose Achilles tendon injury is causing concern, will not join up with Holland and neither Ronny Johnsen nor Henning Berg will be part of Norway's plans. Add to that the fact that Ryan

Giggs may miss the rest of the season with an ankle injury and the scale of the problem is obvious.

"We did well in some respects today," Ferguson said. "Our passing was chaotic at times and in the first 20 minutes we were very lackadaisical, but, considering the exertions of the last two weeks, that is understandable."

Ferguson is not the kind to need any reassurance, but David O'Leary, the Leeds manager, offered some anyway. "I have said I think United will win the title all along," he said, "and I will stay with them now. I thought Arsenal would beat Middlesbrough, so that doesn't really change anything. But one thing is for sure: they will push United all the way."

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KEVIN KEEGAN'S England plans, already stamped with compromise and pragmatism, were thrown into chaos last night when six members of his squad pulled out of the friendly international against Hungary on Wednesday because of injury (Oliver Holt writes).

The withdrawals of Sol Campbell, who has a hamstring injury,

Keegan loses six from his squad

and Andy Cole, who damaged an ankle during Manchester United's draw with Leeds United yesterday, have robbed him of the opportunity to work on the partnerships between Cole and Alan Shearer and

Campbell and Martin Keown. The match at Elland Road also produced two more casualties: Jonathan Woodgate was hurt attempting to prevent United's equaliser and had to be substituted suffering from

a foot injury, while Paul Scholes, who only came on six minutes from the end, is being dogged by the knee trouble that prevented him starting the game in the first place.


Gareth Southgate and Graeme

Le Saux will also be absent through injury. The only piece of good news for Keegan and the squad, who depart for Budapest today, is that Kevin Phillips, the Sunderland striker, is available for selection after his daughter, Millie, recovered from the illness that forced him to miss his side's game with Sheffield United on Saturday.



Sights lowered: Gianluca Vialli, the player-manager, contemplates the likely end of Chelsea's title hopes

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
Arsenal	34	19	12	3	54	15	69	+39
Manchester United	33	19	11	3	73	33	68	+40
Chelsea	34	17	14	3	49	26	65	+23

MANCHESTER UNITED	
	May 1: Aston Villa (h), May 8: Liverpool (a), May 15: Middlesbrough (a), May 22: Blackburn (a), May 29: Tottenham (h)

ARSENAL	
	May 2: Derby County (h), May 8: Tottenham (a), May 15: Leeds United (a), May 22: Aston Villa (h)

CHELSEA	
	May 1: Everton (h), May 8: Leeds United (h), May 15: Tottenham (a), May 22: Derby County (h)

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GIFT VOUCHERS AVAILABLE NOW

Hasselbaink squeezes his shot past Schmeichel, the Manchester United goalkeeper, to put Leeds United ahead at Elland Road yesterday

LEEDS UNITED 1
MANCHESTER UNITED 1
By Oliver Holt
Football Correspondent

Leeds's single moment of anxiety in the first half came when Beckham's corner squirted through to

However, the visitors did not buckle. They dragged themselves back into the game at the start of the second half and equalised in the 55th minute, when Keane's cross was met by Butt. Martyn parried

Cole, right, and Jones get in a tussle.

LEEDS UNITED (4-3-3) N Martyn - M Jones.
Woodgate (sub D Wetherall, 58min), L Radcliffe,
Harte - L Bowyer, D Batley, S McPhail - H Kewell,
A Smith, J F Hasselbaink (sub C Wijnhard, 86)
MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2) P Schmeichel -
G Neville, W Brown, D May, D Irwin (sub P Neville,
72) - D Beckham (sub P Scholes, 84), P Keane,
Burt, J Blomqvist (sub E Sheringham, 77) -
Cols, D Yorke
Referee: D Gallagher.

Duncan Ferguson, the Newcastle forward, has been told to resume full training after consulting a specialist about his debilitating groin injury. It had been feared that he might miss the remainder of the season, after a fleeting appearance in Newcastle's FA Cup semi-final victory over Tottenham Hotspur.



Cole, right, and Jones get in a tangle as Yorke looks on yesterday

Woodgate (sub. D. Winters, 40), L. Hackett, Harte — L. Bowyer, D. Batty, S. McPhail — H. Kewell, A. Smith, J. F. Hasselbank (sub. C. Wijnhard, 86)

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-2): P. Schmeichel — G. Neville, M. Brown, D. May, D. Irwin (sub. P. Neville, 72) — D. Beckham (sub. P. Scholes, 84), R. Keane, I. Butt, J. Blomqvist (sub. E. Sheringham, 77) — A. Cole, D. Yorke

Referee: D. Gallagher.

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Singer/Songwriter

FA Carling Premiership: Relegation picture clears as Forest drop and Everton pull away

Blackburn look ill-equipped for moment of truth

BRIAN KIDD has scoured Europe to keep up to date with the latest coaching innovations, but there is nothing that Ajax, Barcelona or Juventus can come up with that can help him now. His management has been stripped to its essence — the ability of one man to motivate 11 others.

The injury list, long and horrendous, means that there is a little that he can do to refresh his Blackburn Rovers team. Confidence is plunging and luck is running against them. Yet, somehow, this week he must try to bring about a transformation before they travel to Charlton Athletic, where defeat could be a prelude to dropping out of the FA Carling Premiership. This is a match to be watched from a hiding place behind the sofa.

Kidd, a talented coach, is being asked tactical questions that are tying him in knots. A genial man, the Rovers manager is being stretched to snapping point and midway through the first half on Saturday, it appeared that his agitation had boiled over into rage.

With his defence already traumatised by a laughable first goal, Kidd became incensed by the provocative touchline antics of Phil Thompson, the Liverpool coach, after an accidental foul by McAteer on Riedle. It did not take a lip-reading expert to guess that the Middleton Middleweight was offering the Liverpool Lip "outside".

"It was just something from the Manchester United and Liverpool old days," Gerard Houllier, the Arsenal manager, said. "I made me laugh more than anything." But Kidd, despite an apology from Thompson, was still glowering a long time later. "You had better ask Thompson about it," he snapped.

Kidd's mood may grow darker still because, with four games to save Rovers from relegation — including a visit from Manchester United — only someone with Jack Walker's riches would bet on them surviving. They refused to buckle in the second half and even had enough chances

	
BLACKBURN ROVERS	1
LIVERPOOL	3
By Matt Dickinson	

to salvage a point, but the incompetence with which they went 3-0 down after 32 minutes suggested that they are on a course set for disaster. Tragedy, farce, melodrama. There was a bit of everything from Darren Peacock in a mesmerising display. His back pass to John Fylan after 22 minutes was unique, flying chest-high at the Rovers goalkeeper, who could neither catch it nor whack it into the stands. Steve McManaman, who was standing only five yards away, needed only to slide in as the goalkeeper slipped and fumbled having received what they call in rugby union a hospital pass.

There was little that Rovers could do about Liverpool's second in the 31st minute, apart from stopping them passing from the back, shutting down McManaman as he moved down the right flank and closing in on Jamie Redknapp before he unleashed his right-foot shot from 25 yards.

The third goal, a minute later, featured even more inept defending. Peacock and

RELEGATION RUN-IN

Club	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	35	10	10	15	48	37	30
Blackburn	34	11	10	13	48	32	33
Charlton	35	7	11	17	37	52	32
Southampton	35	8	10	17	31	63	32
Nottingham	35	4	9	22	30	68	21

GOVTOWN: May 1: Walsley (H), May 8: Derby (H), May 15: Leicester (H), May 22: Nottingham Forest (H), May 29: Manchester United (H), May 31: Newcastle (H)
 CHARLTON: May 1: Blackburn (H), May 8: Aston Villa (H), May 15: Sheffield Wednesday (H), May 22: Southampton (H), May 29: Leicester (H), May 31: Walsley (H), May 31: Everton (H)
 Reference: R Harris

McAteer, who appeared to be waiting for the No 37 bus, suddenly decided to rush for it and succeeded only in colliding, allowing Leonhardsen to break through and score.

"At a time when you can question what attitude the players will have, they went out and showed they wanted to win for the fans," Houllier said, although the Liverpool camp should be wary of too much backslapping.

They played well in patches, with Leonhardsen, McManaman and Thompson buzzing around just behind Riedle, but can Houllier really be certain that they would have done so had they not been handed such an early and impregnable lead?

Meanwhile, Kidd sought solace in his side's performance in the second half, during which they pulled a goal back through Damien Duff's 18-yard volley in the 63rd minute and went close to a second on several occasions.

Nevertheless, it is evident that desperate circumstances are forcing players on to the pitch when not match-fit. These include Henchoz, who grimaced with pain from a groin strain, and Gallacher, who was understandably subdued on his first start since last year.

Admirably, Kidd is still attempting to see the bigger picture and talking of redeveloping the club and nurturing its roots. "I worked my way up from the youth at Manchester United over more than ten years, so I have seen how it can happen on and off the pitch," he said — but he will know that it is the minor details that count at this stage of the season, such as Wilcox playing out of position and Ward struggling to hold up the ball. Blackburn cannot afford fragility of mind or body when they take that desperate ride into The Valley.

BLACKBURN ROVERS (4-4-2): J Fylan — J McManaman, S Henchoz, D Peacock, G O'Neil — D Johnson (sub: D Dunn, 50min), L Carr, J Wilcox, D Duff — K Gallacher, A Ward
 LIVERPOOL (4-5-1): B Friedel — R Song (sub: S Thorne, 55), J Carragher, S Beardsley, D Matteo — D Thompson, O Leonardson, P Ince, J Redknapp, S McManaman — K Riedle (sub: S Doris, 70)
 Reference: R Harris



Kidd is wondering whether the tide will turn in time for his Blackburn team

Football feast offers little nourishment

THERE are certain combinations that simply do not gel, no matter how worthy the individual ingredients. Just as sun-dried tomatoes should not be paired with chips, nor, under any circumstances, anchovies with custard, so professional sport makes for uneasy digestion when, for one side at least, nothing is at stake.



Fusion football leaves an unpleasant taste: Derby County, vastly superior but mired in the apathy of having so little to play for, Southampton, desperate to wriggle free of the sweaty clutches of relegation, seeping confidence and lacking quality. No goals, no fun and a side-order of ham-fisted effort.

It was a result that sated the appetite of neither, even if the wounds inflicted upon Blackburn Rovers and Charlton Athletic made Southampton's point glitter like a trophy. It was illusory, however. Even if they were to finish fourth from bottom in the FA Carling Premiership — which, laughably, in the circumstances, Dave Jones described as "the best in the world" — another season of strain and purgatory surely beckons.

Within the confines of this quite dreadful exhibition, that prospect appears no closer this morning. "We expected Southampton to come after us, because they needed to win, but they didn't," Jim Smith, the Derby manager, shrugged. Seven consecutive defeats away from home have palpably curbed all adventure, all but the most defensive sensibilities, but this was a match that could have offered more.

By the end of a dispiriting afternoon, only the feline form of Neil Moss soared above the general morass. On three occasions in a lopsided second-half — a marked improvement on the first, nonetheless — the Southampton goalkeeper flung himself at the feet of his aggressors. Twice, Dean Sturridge, the substitute, was repelled in this manner, while a fortunate knee blocked a stubbed shot from Darryl Powell.

"I would have preferred all three points, which would have taken us out of the bottom three, but you can't have

	
DERBY COUNTY	0
SOUTHAMPTON	0
By George Caulkin	

everything," Jones said, neglecting to mention that something, anything, would have sufficed.

"I've got to be happy with a clean sheet, the way we battled and threw ourselves in front of the ball. It's still very tight, but we've got to make sure that, when we play at home next week, we don't let all this hard work go to waste."

It will be different at The Dell, of course, even if Leicester City, Southampton's forthcoming opponents, are another team already mentally packing their suitcases for the summer. At their own compact ground, Southampton have not lost since Boxing Day. Perhaps the elusive Mart Le Tissier will have recovered from the convenient calf strain that prompted his absence on Saturday. Perhaps the sun will shine. Perhaps there will be no more war, policemen will wear daisies in their hair and burger vans will declare a moratorium on GM foods.

At Pride Park — even the name was a mocking irony — all Southampton got was a couple of half-chances from Marius Pahars, the Latvia striker. There was a long-range shot well saved by Matt Powell, a penalty appeal that died in the throat and a precise, grass-cutting cross from James Beattie, which Pahars, in a whirl of limbs, contrived to miss. He made a meal of it all right, but the taste buds hardly tingled.

DERBY COUNTY (3-4-1-2): M Moss — S Hilly, K Monkou, J Dodd, F Benali — M O'Leary (sub: J Beardsley, 63), M Hughes, H Jackliff (sub: E O'Sullivan, 70), C Marsden — J Beattie, M Pahars (sub: D Hirst, 83)
 Reference: A White

Campbell strikes hope into hearts of Goodison faithful



Gemmill has his spirits lifted as he helps Campbell celebrate another goal that should prove vital to Everton's survival

BEFORE a match, history goes for a stroll. The abrupt, wrenching transactions of the transfer market make it so. A player leaves, but the replica strip remains. Around Goodison Park on Saturday, there were still supporters with the name Ferguson stretched across their shoulders.



It is not just economic reasons that prevent them from buying a new top. These people are attached to that jersey, rather than stuck with it. To outsiders, Duncan Ferguson might have been a forward who scored infrequently and injured his groin often, but that is not how he is seen by many followers of Everton. To them, it was as if the club had surrendered its character when the Scot was sold to Newcastle United in November of last year.

Without him, Everton were at a standstill, a side that could hardly budge from a parlous position in the FA Carling Premiership. Worries remain, but now, at last, the paralysis is gone.

The vacancy inside Ferguson's No 9 jersey has been filled. Six goals in the past three matches, including two against Charlton Athletic, leave Kevin Campbell unchallenged as Everton's leading scorer in the Premiership. More significantly, the forward, who is on loan from Trabzonspor, has helped his new colleagues to win three successive league matches for the first time in 15 months.

The excitement has bred security and the fear of relegation has been evicted from the premises. Of course, nobody imagines that life at Goodison will be made up of heroics and heroes from now on. The identity of the new owners, who are to buy the controlling interest of Peter Johnson, is yet to be established and it is impossible to tell what funds might be available thereafter.

Will there be enough to make the signing of Campbell permanent? There is a risk that his impact will stir the interest of rival bidders. Everton were in their thir-

	
EVERTON	4
CHARLTON ATHLETIC	1
By Kevin McCarra	

teenth home match of the season before they notched their fourth Premiership goal at Goodison. Campbell has hit as many in his past two appearances at the ground. Such are the quirks of the forward's prolific form will raise doubts. At 29, Campbell needs to score twice more to reach the total of 100 league goals in England. It is an honourable record, but the present strike rate is a delicious spell that cannot be regarded as

typical. Campbell's joy in escaping the miseries he encountered in Turkey and the euphoric reaction of a crowd that yearned for a figurehead have put him in a heightened state of effectiveness.

It may be wiser to simply appreciate the vigour with which Everton have met the demands of the moment. Walter Smith, the manager, felt that the game with Charlton had been "tense", but that reaction probably reflected anxieties over league position, rather than the match itself.

As if the risk of falling from the Premiership were not enough, Charlton must feel persecuted. With his arm outstretched, Don Hutchison charged down a clearance to open the scoring with a shot that squirmed under the goalkeeper, but Paul Aloek, the referee, did not see his handball. Campbell added another from a difficult angle after his first shot was blocked.

In the second half, he combined with Francis Jeffers before glance-

ing Everton's third with a header. Scott Gemmill, a cheap and telling purchase by Smith, initiated a counter-attack 15 minutes from time. Campbell gathered possession and strode down the middle of the pitch, but it was the movement of Jeffers, 18, that delighted. Instead of breaking, predictably, on the left, he made his run across the face of a defence that was distracted by the advancing Campbell and accepted a pass on the right of the penalty area to score.



Charlton's thoughts turned to the necessity of beating Blackburn Rovers next weekend. Nothing could pique the opposition. When Graham Stuart did convert a penalty, there was a cordial reaction from the stands for a former Everton player.

EVERTON (3-5-2): T Moore — C Sheen, D Watson, D Hutchinson, M Bani — K Campbell, F Jeffers
 CHARLTON ATHLETIC (3-5-2): A Peterson — R Ruffus (sub: A Hunt, 67min), E Youds, C Tier — D Miles, K Jones, M Kinsella, G Stuart, C Powell (sub: S Brown, 87) — M Pringle, M Singh (sub: J Barnes, 67)
 Reference: P Aloek

Heskey inspires Leicester revival

THERE IS, it seems, nothing like a devastating cup setback to give sparkle to a league campaign. Arsenal's loss to the ten men of Manchester United in their FA Cup semi-final replay appears merely to have sharpened their aim in front of goal, while Leicester City, beaten by Tottenham Hotspur's ten men in the Worthington Cup final, have turned their Wembley blues into a purple patch in the FA Carling Premiership.

A deserved victory over Coventry City on Saturday took Leicester's unbeaten record to six matches since they lost the final, comprising three wins, including those at Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur, and three draws, one of them away to Chelsea. Although the threat of relegation was averted to all intents and purposes halfway through that sequence, a team that plays in the shadow of Martin O'Neill's animated presence on the touchline is never going to mark its arrival at the 40-point safety level by taking forty wins on the pitch. Consequently, the manager could yet celebrate a third consecu-

	
LEICESTER CITY	1
COVENTRY CITY	0
By Bill Edgar	

five top-ten finish since he took City into the top flight.

Part of the reason for Leicester's revival has been the contribution of their main striker, Emile Heskey. Having attended the same school in Leicester as Gary Lineker and followed his path to Filbert Street, Heskey will further emulate his hero if Kevin Keegan gives him his England debut against Hungary in Budapest on Wednesday.

As if to emphasise the similarity with his predecessor, Heskey used his unfamiliar role on the right of three forwards to demonstrate the kind of wing skills that Lineker dis-

played when he was reluctantly banished to the right flank at Barcelona. "He made some really strong runs in the first half," O'Neill said of the 21-year-old. Three of those runs led to bookings for Quinn, Burrows and Shaw as they tried in vain to stop him fairly.

Heskey appears to have recovered from the back injury that, until recently, restricted his movement and meant that he was frequently unable to complete matches. His failure to score since mid-December, in part because of his fitness problems, needs rectifying, but O'Neill said: "He has played much better for us since the Worthington Cup final."

The presence of two 33-year-olds alongside him up front gave Heskey an extra responsibility for running, but it was Ian Marshall, one of his veteran team-mates, who shouldered the burden of goalscoring for the second consecutive game. In first-half injury time, a corner by Steve Guppy, who has made the most crosses in the Premiership this season, was headed home by Mar-

shall, who has perhaps had the most crosses to bear in a campaign blighted by a persistent hamstring injury.

Solved's late turn and shot was the closest that a disappointing Coventry came to scoring, but, with three games remaining, the likelihood of them being relegated has probably become more remote because the chasers beneath them generally had bad days

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as well. Darren Huckerby looked out of sorts, but if he wants encouragement in a goalless run of 14 games, he need only note the name of Heskey in the England squad.

LEICESTER CITY (3-4-3): K Koller — F Sander, M Elliott, P Vassell — A Treacy, M Lennon (sub: A Gunnarsson, 60min), R Sneyd, S Guppy — E Heskey, I Marshall (sub: G Fenton, 66), A Coote (sub: S Campbell, 88)
 COVENTRY CITY (4-4-2): M Hedman — G Brown, R Shaw, P Williams, D Burrows — T Toller (sub: M Holt, 46), P Clement (sub: T E Satchell, 74), B Court, G Bunting — D Huckerby, J Ayoze (sub: S Giacomini, 60)
 Reference: G Barber

Forest and Atkinson quit big stage

THREE months ago, as Ron Atkinson lazed on a beach in the Caribbean, he received an emergency call from International Rescue. Nottingham Forest needed saving from relegation and only Big Ron could help them. He struck a deal, reputedly worth £10,000 a week, finished his holiday and blasted off for the City Ground. Thunderbirds were gone.

Fourteen matches later, of which only two were won, Forest bowed to the inevitable and out of the FA Carling Premiership. Atkinson's talon had faded, yet the pallor of failure was unmistakable at Villa Park on Saturday. For the third time in six years, Forest had gone to that first division in the sky.

Mr Bojangles, he of the glittering jewellery and imposing paunch, had had little effect. Perhaps not even Thunderbirds, Gerry Anderson's puppet saviours of the world, could have spared Forest from their fate. They were a lost cause many months ago.

"I've no regrets about taking the job," Atkinson said. "It was always an uphill struggle.

We battled away, but you need quality at this level and we didn't have it." Would he continue in management? "Only time will tell," he replied. "When I have made that decision, I'll tell the appropriate people."

Apparently, a Sunday newspaper employs those people. Atkinson, 60, the former international forward for BSA Tools FC, will retire at the end of the season. He will ride off into the sunset and concentrate on his television commentary work and business interests.

What now for Forest, whose return to the Premiership was effectively strangled at birth? Kevin Campbell and Pierre van Hooijdonk, their 58-goal first-division strike force, were parted before a ball had been kicked. Campbell left for Turkey but is now scoring goals for fun with Everton; Van Hooijdonk refused to play but is now occasionally appearing in midfield.

Amid the mess, good news: Forest are/were one of the few Premiership clubs without substantial debts, although that

	
ASTON VILLA	2
NOTTINGHAM FOREST	0
By Russell Kempson	

Dave Bassett, Atkinson's predecessor, was dismissed in January but could be found in a Villa Park executive suite on Saturday, entertaining the guests with his after-dinner wit: Nigel Wray, chairman of Forest plc, resigned recently to concentrate on Saracens RFC; and Irving Scholar, the club's Monaco-based director of football, will leave during the summer.

Amid the mess, good news: Forest are/were one of the few Premiership clubs without substantial debts, although that

will be scant encouragement to the 200 or so fans who bothered to turn up for the last rites and spent most of a wretched game mocking the players' plight.

Villa won much as they pleased, with goals from Draper and Barry, his first for the club, and rumbled on in pursuit of a place in the Inter-Toto Cup. "I think we dragged Forest down to our level," John Gregory, the Villa manager, said. "It wasn't pretty."

Steve Stone, the Villa and former Forest midfielder player, read the signs and deserted the sinking ship last month. "The writing was on the wall a long time ago," he said. "Ron came in for the quick fix, but there was little he could do. His hands were tied, he had no money to spend. You can't blame him."

ASTON VILLA (4-4-2): M Calves — S Watson (sub: D Egan, 71min), C Calderwood, G Southgate, A Wright — S Stone (sub: M Deakin, 82), I Taylor, M Draper, P Merson — D O'Leary (sub: G Barry, 46), J Jochum
 NOTTINGHAM FOREST (3-5-2): M Crossley — O Hyde, J Maddison, S Chelver, M Lous-Jean, A Johnson (sub: B Barlow, 56), A Rogers, D Lytle, S Stanger (sub: P van Hooijdonk, 47) — M Harewood, D Freedman (sub: N Shephard, 73)
 Reference: P Duran (sub: J Patten, 28)

Carling 1

Weary

Berkovic rest

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

WEST HAM UNITED

Stephen We

7 year

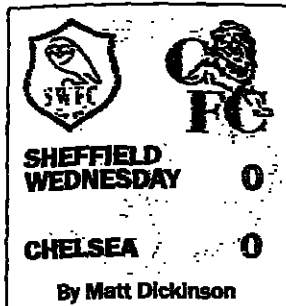
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FA Carling Premiership: Two-club race heats up as champions take over pole position

Weary Chelsea concede title

Breathtaking Arsenal throw down the gauntlet



WEARY acceptance overcame Chelsea yesterday. They had not even pulled out of Hillsborough before Gianluca Vialli started talking about plans for next season. His players are already ticking off the days before they will be able to hit the beach.

While Manchester United maintain the attack on three fronts, one is proving too many for Vialli's side, who continue to cling to third place in the FA Carling Premiership rather than grabbing it with any certainty. They looked a tired team yesterday, lacking width, pace and the ability to produce the unexpected. Their only consolation was that Leeds United had not made up any ground. Just when they should be flying, Chelsea are playing with their wings clipped.

David O'Leary's side travel to Stamford Bridge next week and a draw should be enough for Chelsea to keep them at arm's length in the race for the European Cup. A top-three finish is nothing to be ashamed of for a club that is on a steady rise, but the deflating finale to their season has emphasised only how far they still have to travel rather than how far they have come.

"It is about Manchester United and Arsenal now," Vialli said after his side's third Premiership draw in succession. "I think that, with the tough games that United still have to play, Arsenal may be slight favourites."

"It is down to those two because we have just not been able to get the wins recently. We are in a better shape than last year, but there is still a way for us to go."

His team yesterday was substantially different from that which lost to Real Mallorca in the Cup Winners' Cup on Thursday, but the method was just as mundane. Vialli paired himself with Mikael Forsell in



Vialli, the Chelsea player-manager, who restored himself to the team at Hillsborough yesterday, tries a snap shot, only to have it blocked by Jonk

the starting line-up, but they could summon no more verve than Flo and Zola had in the 1-0 defeat in Spain. "Where is the goalscorer," went up the cry — it is the epitaph to their title campaign.

Forsell disappeared at half-time, if he had not done so already, to be replaced by Zola, but there was something horribly rudimentary about this Chelsea display. Desailly, who had been switched into midfield, went through the motions, Wise's promptings came to naught more often than not, while Poyet was taken off on the hour shortly after heading wide one of his team's best chances of the game.

Indeed, if anybody was go-

ing to triumph, it was Wednesday, who grew more confident as the game went on, while Chelsea, for whom Kevin Hitchcock deputised in goal, flagged.

Their chances became increasingly tempting, the best falling to Des Walker in the closing moments, but the former England defender went for it in the style of a man who had not scored in 263 previous games for the club. He scuffed the ball all of five yards goalwards, but he need not have felt embarrassed. Exceptional throughout, he had no difficulties subduing Vialli, whose frustration became more evident with every anguished cry.

Walker was the springboard for Wednesday's sprightly second half, in which Mark McKeever, a left winger making his debut two years after joining the club from Peterborough United, showed promising touches, even if, like his teammates, he failed to also display a nose for goal.

"I thought we were going to get the winner as the game went on," Danny Wilson, the Wednesday manager said, "because that is the best we have played for a long time. I thought the players answered a lot of criticism. We probably need one more point to be safe, but it was important getting a confidence boost against a team as good as Chelsea."

While Chelsea cannot afford to neglect their European ambitions over the remaining four games, Wednesday have some of their own. UEFA's bizarre ruling over English qualification may yet provide a "fair-play place" for the team in the FA Carling Premiership with the best disciplinary record and Wilson's side remain in pole position, with only one booking added to their tally yesterday.

"You have to have a lot of sympathy for a team like West Ham, who have done it week-in and week-out and might not qualify," Wilson said, "but that is nothing to do with us. If they [UEFA] want to give it to us, I will take it with both hands."

Wednesday's record might have been spoilt had the referee not been so lenient when Carbone struck Wise on the back of the head after the Chelsea captain had pulled out the Italian's hair-band in a typically juvenile prank. Carbone escaped without so much as a caution, while Wise was ruled, but could not bring himself to retaliate. Truly, Chelsea have resigned themselves to their lot.

Sheffield Wednesday (4-4-2): P. St. John — P. Allerton, E. Thomas, D. Stendero — N. Alexander, D. Somer, W. Jones, M. McManis — B. Carbone, A. Booth (sub. R. Crosswell, 79min).

Chelsea (4-4-2): K. Hitchcock — A. Farnie, B. Larnbourne, F. Laboul, C. Baley — B. Gocheski, M. Desailly, D. Wise, G. Poyet (sub. E. Newton, 58) — G. Vialli, M. Forsell (sub. G. Zola, 45).
Referee: S. Dunn.

Berkovic restores calm

THE senses were in danger of blurring after a whirlwind afternoon at White Hart Lane, but one observation was undeniable: West Ham United cannot afford, no matter how high the price, to lose Eyal Berkovic.

The only sense aroused when the Israeli international had the ball against Tottenham Hotspur was one of rare calm. His positional play, his first touch and the timing of his passes was soothing indeed. He did not score, but he made sure that his team could enjoy a satisfying victory.

No wonder he is wanted at Anfield, as an important part of the anticipated rebuilding work to be sanctioned by Gerard Houllier, the Liverpool manager. No wonder, too, that Liverpool plan to float the club on the Stock Market, for they will need plenty of funds to prise their target away from Upton Park.

"There are players going for four and five million pounds that are not fit to lace Eyal's boots," Harry Redknapp, the West Ham manager, said. "Someone would have to pay a lot of money for him, but I am not talking figures because it sounds like I want to sell him. I don't and Eyal has



never shown to me that he wants to leave West Ham."

The manner in which Redknapp has strengthened the club is a tribute to his managerial skills. Persuading Berkovic to join West Ham instead of Tottenham in the first place was useful, but now West Ham stand at a crossroads and Berkovic sums up their predicament. Peter Storr, the director of football, was dismissed at the end of last week, in a move that left Redknapp "shocked and mystified". The side are sixth in the FA Carling Premiership and, regardless of the confusion over qualification for the UEFA Cup, deserve a place in Europe next season.

Berkovic created their first goal on Saturday after four

minutes, a move that was finished by Ian Wright, who chipped the ball into an empty net from 30 yards. Midway through the second half, a pass by Berkovic found Marc Koller and he ran on to slip the ball under Ian Walker's body to extend the lead.

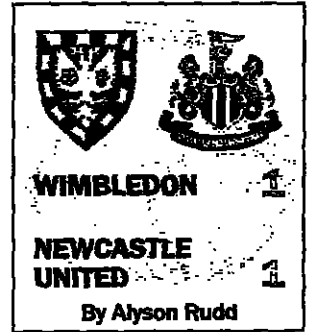
Then Tottenham — and the match — exploded into life. David Ginola gave the home side hope of saving a point with another glorious goal and the tension had mounted sufficiently for John Moncur to lose his temper in injury time. He scythed down Jose Dominguez, prompting a mêlée in the middle of the field and a red card from Uriah Rennie, the referee.

The acrimony did not stop there. Ginola had words with Redknapp as they left the field, one Tottenham fan made a complaint to the police about the celebrations of Steve Lomas while Moncur, surrounded by West Ham fans, showed no remorse for his sending-off.

Tottenham Hotspur (4-4-2): I. Walker — S. Carr, L. Young, S. Campbell, M. Tappin — D. Anderson (sub. A. Nielsen, 79min), T. Storr, S. Faint, D. Girdle — S. Henson (sub. C. Armstrong, 60), J. Dorrington.

West Ham United (4-4-1-1): S. Heston — S. Lomas, J. France, R. Ferdinand, S. Latta — T. Storr, J. Moncur, F. Lampard, M. Koller — E. Berkovic — I. Wright (sub. S. Lazard, 90).
Referee: U. Farnie.

Gullit's mind elsewhere



take heart from only their second point in eight matches, then perhaps the sacrifice of John Harrison, who scored his first goal since his £7.5 million transfer — a strike from a tight angle — was worth it.

Newcastle were similarly insular. Their supporters crammed into Selhurst Park and deserved to witness some passion, but Gullit, it seems, only has eyes for May 22 and the all-important choice of player for the big day. He made five changes to the side he named in midweek for the trip to Hillsborough and will no doubt continue to rotate his players until he finds the perfect combination to outwit Ferguson.

Gullit is even engrossed in the honeymoon period. There have been rumblings on Tyne-side that Gullit has three high-profile signings in mind and the identity of one was revealed yesterday when it emerged he had placed a bid of £10 million for Dani, the Real Mallorca striker, whose goal in the first leg of the Cup Winners' Cup semi-final effectively put Chelsea out of the competition.

In the meantime, Newcastle are relying on Alan Shearer. The England captain is not what he was, but even a less sharp version is valuable and he gave Newcastle the lead, after Maric set up Hamann for a cross to the far post.

Hamann will be a crucial figure at Wembley. The German midfielder player combines strength with guile and, after daintily exchanging passes with Solano, saw Sullivan dive at full stretch to deny him the winner from a vicious strike. That the best chance of a winner came in the first half illustrated how tame the second became.

Wimbledon (4-4-2): N. Sullivan — D. Jupp, K. Cunningham, D. Blackwell, B. Thatcher — M. Gayle, R. Earle, J. East, C. Hughes — C. Cort, J. Harrison (sub. A. Kimble, 79min).

Newcastle United (4-3-1-2): S. Goven — A. Griffin, M. Oduro, D. Baniyadi, D. Dorr — D. Hamann, G. Speed, M. Solano — S. Maric — A. Arshavin, A. Shearer.
Referee: F. Jones.

IT SEEMS to have come with the blossoming of spring, this return of life after the greyness of winter. These past few weeks, England has been treated to a festival of football to quicken the pulse and stir the emotions. At the Riverside on Saturday, the exuberance continued unabated.

Arsenal's performance on Teesside amounted to a celebration of the sport, a glorious display of attacking, exotic skill that had even the Middlesbrough supporters standing on their feet to applaud in wonder and admiration.

This was a match played in the spirit of Manchester United's victory over Juventus, of their dramatic triumph over Arsenal in that classic FA Cup semi-final replay and of Arsenal's own trouncing of Wimbledon last Monday.

It was thrilling, breathtaking stuff. Even Gary Pallister, the battle-hardened Middlesbrough defender, used those words to describe it. Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, said it was the best display that he had seen by any side this season.

It has got to the stage now, with only a handful of games left to decide the destiny of the championship, where United and Arsenal are almost daring each other to surpass what has gone before, as if they are setting new standards of excellence every time they play.

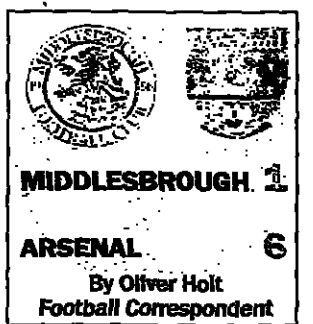
It is not like the traditional climax of a season, the usual glut of tense, tight games decided by one defensive error, one incisive move. This is free-flowing, unbridled magic. It will have to stop somewhere, but, for now, it is wonderful just to lap it up.

Arsenal were so good on Saturday that their supporters took pity on the home fans. A strange sort of camaraderie sprung up between them, as something special brought them together. And so, late in the second half, the Arsenal supporters urged Middlesbrough on. They cheered good humouredly when Tony Adams shot high over the crossbar, they even leapt up and down when Alan Armstrong got Middlesbrough's empty consolation goal three minutes from the final whistle.

By then, of course, they knew that they had all but wiped out the advantage in goal difference that United had held over them, they knew they had gone to the top of the table for the first time this season and that United would be feeling the heat of their challenge.

Arsenal had taken the lead in the third minute. Patrick Vieira bamboozled Andy Townsend by flicking the ball casually over his head and when he slipped a pass through to Nicolas Anelka, Steve Vickers mistimed his tackle and Marc Overmars converted the penalty.

David Seaman made two fine saves to deny Brian



Deane and Dean Gordon, but Arsenal went further ahead seven minutes before half-time when Vieira fed another pass through to Anelka and the French forward clipped his left-foot shot beyond Mark Schwarzer. A few seconds before the interval, the visitors killed the game off. Anelka, keen to impress after some recent lacklustre performances and a game cooling his heels in the stand, crossed from the right, Kanu sidestepped Gordon and curled his shot deliberately into the corner from six yards out.

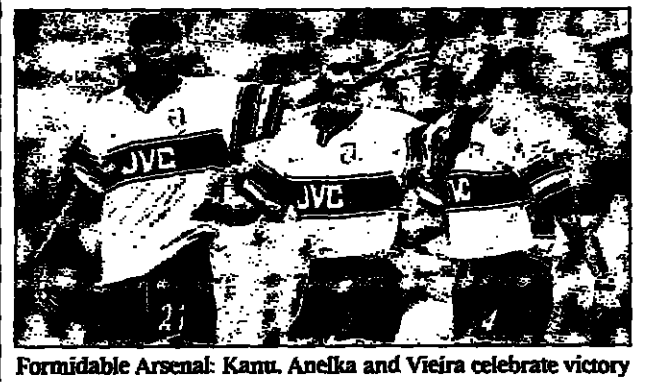
That, though, was prosaic compared with what followed. If anything, Arsenal stepped up a gear and, before an hour had gone, they went four ahead with a goal of beautiful simplicity, economy and selflessness. Vieira started and finished this one. He played a one-two that freed Anelka on the right and then hurried towards the box. Anelka cut inside and teed up Overmars who shaped to shoot but passed the ball square to Vieira instead and the Frenchman stroked it past Schwarzer.

Even that, though, was surpassed by Kanu's second two minutes later. Standing 12 yards out, Kanu seemed to have few options when Lee Dixon curled a knee-high cross towards him, but he astonished the crowd and Schwarzer by leaping into the air and executing the first volleyed drag-back flick most of us had ever seen. It flew beyond the goalkeeper into the corner of the net.

Twelve minutes before the end, Kanu turned provider, rolling a short pass to Vieira, who stepped inside Vickers and lashed his shot high into the net off the hands of Schwarzer. It was almost a relief when Armstrong rose to glance home Townsend's free kick, but it says much for the Arsenal defence that even in the midst of this carnival, it spoilt their day. "They did not like that," Arsene Wenger said, after the game.

The scary thing is, it gives them something to improve upon for next time. Apart from that, this was perfection. Middlesbrough (3-5-2): M. Schwarzer — S. Vickers, G. Pallister, C. Cooper (sub. V. Kicker, 57min) — R. Shotton (sub. M. Sutton, 62), R. Mustoe, A. Townsend, N. Macdonald (sub. A. Armstrong, 71), D. Gordon — R. Board, B. Osime.

Arsenal (4-2-3-1): D. Seaman — L. Dixon, S. Bould, T. Adams, N. Winterburn — P. Vieira, E. Pele (sub. S. Hughes, 68) — R. Paur, K. Davis, M. Vives, T. B. M. Overmars (sub. K. Davis, 89) — N. Anelka.
Referee: M. Riley.



Formidable Arsenal: Kanu, Anelka and Vieira celebrate victory

17 year old high jumper given clearance for take off.



The British Airways Olympic Futures Programme of multi-sport training camps in London and Orlando is helping 175 young British athletes achieve their Olympic dreams.

BRITISH AIRWAYS
The world's favourite airline

Vieri's header gives Lazio leading edge

WARNING: mass brawls in Europe can seriously damage your domestic footballing prospects. The players of Bologna and Marseille know this better than most.

Both teams are under investigation after they finished their Uefa Cup semi-final on Tuesday night with fists and boots flying and the unseemly violence that followed the penalty that put the French club into the final then had its repercussions when both teams returned home. Each was demolished 4-0 in league action over the weekend.

For Marseille, the defeat could be costly indeed. They lead the French championship by a single point and their goal

difference is now worse than Bordeaux, their rivals, after surrendering to Lens on Saturday, with two of the goals coming from Tony Vairelles and two from Daniel Moreira. Yesterday, Bologna succumbed to Salernitana by the same score in Serie A.

At the top of the Italian championship, Lazio kept their one-point advantage after a classic headed goal from Christian Vieri, the Italy centre forward, put Sampdoria further into the relegation mire. Quite a change, this, for Vieri, who

in Rome on Thursday, had contrived to miss far easier chances when Lazio showed disdainful disregard for the Cup Winners' Cup.

Nevertheless, their victory over Sampdoria in Genoa was clouded by bitter controversy. Vieri's goal was sweet enough, coming on the hour and vindicating the best moment that the referee had enjoyed all afternoon. He had seen a blatant Sampdoria foul, but allowed Almeida to continue Lazio's momentum and Sergio Conceicao to pinpoint his cross to the

near post, where Vieri, timing his run, headed the goal.

That was it, 1-0 for Lazio, their first win in four faltering league contests. The 20 million Roman team had Almeida dismissed for his second caution, an instinctive handball, but Ariel Ortega, Sampdoria's Argentina international, was then also shown the red card.

for persistent diving. The referee twice denied Sampdoria reasonable penalty claims and to the end it was a tracious, inelegant match.

All the while, news was filtering through that AC Milan, with goals from Oliver Bierhoff and Leonardo, were comfortable winners away to Vicenza. As in England, it now

looks to be a straight two-horse race, between Lazio and Milan. Both Parma, defeated 1-0 by AS Roma, and Fiorentina, who fell to Juventus, have lost ground.

The mood of mourning in Italy, after Manchester United's defeat of Juventus, was not lifted at the San Siro, where Marcello Lippi, who is seen to be inducted as the 63 million-a-year coach at Internazionale, saw the team that he will inherit decided by their supporters and dismantled by Udinese, 3-1. In ninth place, may not be

able to offer Ronaldo *et al* a place in Europe next season.

In Germany, Bayern Munich, the opponents for United in the European Cup final next month, were held 1-1 by 1860 in the Munich derby. Markus Babbel scored early on for Bayern, but two minutes from the end the league leaders allowed Marco Kurz to equalise. In Germany, too, there is a two-horse race for the title, but even though Ulf Kirsten ensured a fifth straight win for Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday, Bayern are eight points ahead.

Spanish fans scarcely know whether it is best to rejoice in pleasures of the present, or the promise of the future. Their next generation handsomely won the World Youth Cup in Nigeria over the weekend, beating Japan in the final, and, as Chelsea will verify, there are hidden strengths to the Spanish game.

Dani, whose valuation has now risen above £10 million, the figure that Newcastle United have had rejected, scored again for Real Mallorca yesterday, the last of six that Mallorca amassed against Athletic Bilbao. Clearly, the island team is still on a high after relieving Chelsea of the Cup Winners' Cup.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: BIRMINGHAM ASSURED OF PLAY-OFF PLACE AFTER RIVALS DROP POINTS

Wolves pay price for penalty miss

Wolverhampton Wanderers 1
West Bromwich Albion 1

By A CORRESPONDENT

FORTUNE failed to favour the brave at Molineux yesterday as Wolverhampton Wanderers took another tentative step towards the Nationwide League first division play-offs.

Keith Curle, their captain, had the opportunity to secure three points and erase the memory of an own goal that settled the Black Country derby at The Hawthorns in August, 1997. However, his 54th-minute penalty was appallingly high and it will be West Bromwich Albion who derive most satisfaction from the points shared with their local rivals.

Dennis Smith, the West Bromwich manager, acknowledged Curle's courage in stepping up to try to convert the spot kick. "It's easy to criticise, but it took a lot of bottle to take a penalty in a match like this," he said. "Having said that, I was delighted when it went over."

Wolves remain in sixth place after this result, one that confirmed the participation in the play-offs of their other near-neighbours, Birmingham City, and ended the lingering hopes of Sheffield United. Now Wolves, Bolton Wanderers and Watford are the three candidates for the final two places.

Graham Taylor, the Watford manager, has asserted that there is no better time to overtake your opponents than on the tape and if his side win away to Port Vale tomorrow night, they will emerge as favourites, with Wolves and Bolton due to play one another at the Reebok Stadium on Friday evening.

Despite the loss of two points, Colin Lee, the Wolves manager, was not downhearted. "We're disappointed but not deflated," Lee, whose team have lost just once in the last 18 games, said. "Everyone at the club has worked for this and there is a massive determination among all the players to get on with it."

Much of that endeavour appeared to dissolve after 18 minutes, when Mick Evans escaped his defensive marker inside the Wolves area and struck his right-foot shot past Stowell to put West Bromwich ahead.

It was a familiar scenario for visiting supporters. Although without a win in their past seven games, the most important statistic for them in what has been a season of underachievement was the three successive victories over Wolves without conceding a goal.

After a succession of passes, Wolves equalised when a free kick by Simpson to the far post eluded those players in a packed six-yard box before Carl Robinson found a



Muscat is brought down by Kilbane to earn Wolves a penalty, but Curle put the spot kick over the bar

decisive touch on ground level at the far post.

Curle's fateful moment arrived after a graceful one-two between Muscat and Robinson allowed the former to advance into the penalty area. There, the hustling attentions of Kilbane saw Muscat fall to the floor and Peter Eastwood, the assistant referee who had replaced

Mick Pierce at half-time, pointed to the spot.

Wolves had two late chances to win: Keane, a substitute, shot over and with a minute left, Bull, also on as substitute, discovered that several months out of first-team action had dulled his sharpness as Burgess, the West Bromwich captain, recovered to challenge after

the striker had been presented with the rare commodities of time and space in front of goal.

WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS (4-4-1-1): M. Stowell — K. Muscat, D. Richards, K. Curle, M. Gillespie — N. Embley, C. Robinson, S. Satchell, P. Simpson, S. G. O'Brien, 77 min. — S. Connolly (sub: R. Keane, 88) — H. Ho (sub: B. Bull, 89).
WEST BROMWICH ALBION (4-4-2): P. Whitehead — A. Mc Dermott, D. Burgess, M. Carbone, G. Foster — S. Flynn, R. Snodgrass, J. van Buren, K. Kilbane — M. Evans (sub: J. Dunn, 88), L. Hughes. Referee: M. Pierce (sub: P. Eastwood, 45).

London stage in state of collapse

Queens Park Rangers 1
Bradford City 3

By KEITH PIKE

QUIZ question: who finished the inaugural Premier League campaign as the capital's top club? No. Wrong again. Not them, either. Yes, it really was. Queens Park Rangers' fall from grace has been dramatic and traumatic and the life may not have reached the ground floor yet.

The club that lorded it over London so recently could find next season that only Barnet are operating at a lower level and, let's face it, life doesn't get more undistinguished than that. "Results don't lie and our results over the past two years speak for themselves," Gerry Francis, the director of football, admitted after their defeat to Bradford City on Saturday. "This is a good football club, but it needs a lot of help."

What it needs most of all, though, is a win. Any win. Three points would almost certainly be enough to prevent QPR's descent into the Nationwide League second division, but they have hit poor form again at exactly the wrong time. This was their fourth successive defeat and they have the best part of a full team either cracked or banned with only two games left.

"I don't think anyone's too good to go down," Francis said. QPR are certainly not too good. A club that could once boast Bowles and Marsh, that finished fifth in the Premier League as recently as 1993 with Ferdinand and Wilkins

to the fore, is now dependent on the likes of Baradough, Kulcar and Jeanne for salvation. Fine players they may prove to be in time, but time is not on QPR's side.

For half an hour, their mix of perspiration and desperation — inspiration was strictly off limits — matched Bradford's more measured approach. But once they had gone behind to Beagrie's goal against the run of play, QPR were a beaten side. Worse still, they looked like they knew it.

Westwood struck a second on the hour. Goals gave QPR brief hope with ten minutes left, but Watson hit a third for Bradford after Westwood and Beagrie had gone forward to forehead like a pair of stage without the antlers for the intelligence. Both feigned their innocence. Both went through the motions of appearing distraught at being sent off. Both, to be honest, made complete fools of themselves.

Bradford did not need telling the significance of the day's events, here and at Portman Road. Their goal tally is so superior to Ipswich Town's that victories against Oxford United on Saturday and away to Wolverhampton Wanderers eight days later will see them promoted to heights that were last attained in 1922. What an achievement that would be.

QUEENS PARK RANGERS (4-4-2): L. Harper — T. Brindley, K. Pritchard, D. McLeod, I. Baradough — L. Jeanne (sub: A. Lingard, 50 min), G. Kulcar (sub: P. Marne, 52), G. Pritchard, K. Pritchard (sub: D. Dore, 82) — K. Galloway, S. Stace.
BRADFORD CITY (4-4-2): G. Walsh — S. Wright, J. O'Neil, A. Westwood, W. Jackson (sub: J. O'Neil, 38) — L. Simpson, G. Whalley, S. McCall, P. Beagrie — R. Beagrie (sub: D. Whalley, 75), L. Mills (sub: G. Watson, 87). Referee: R. Styles



Graydon, on the up

Lincoln City 0
Walsall 1

By MARTIN WOODS

RAY GRAYDON's mobile telephone went off while he was addressing the press after the game. Whoever called hung up on the Walsall manager. Perhaps a joker in his side orchestrated the prank from the safety of the dressing room, where Graydon has banned such modern devices. It's doubtful. Graydon's side are deadly serious and so is he. The three points earned against a feverish but ill-

Watford 2
Crystal Palace 1

By KEVIN EASON

EVEN as the final whistle sounded, a tracksuited Graham Taylor was urging his Watford players into attack, his arms whirling like a demented air steward, pointing out the exits which lead to the FA Carling Premiership.

Taylor says that this will be the week that could decide whether his side will be in the Nationwide League first division play-offs. They have a tough game away to Port Vale tomorrow, one they have to win to retain hopes of gaining a place among the contenders.

Yet while everything is going their way — Watford are the team in form, this victory being their fifth in succession — Taylor is only too conscious of the fact that they could lose

Taylor intends to go for broke

out by virtue of the number of goals scored if they finish equal on points for the fourth play-off position. It was agony for him as his players shot over the bar, wide of the post, and almost anywhere but into the net — and then he had to suffer further as Palace pummelled his defence into giving away a late goal.

"The last ten minutes were really nerve-racking because we had not been able to kill them off with a third goal," he said. "That has happened to us in the last few games where we have not finished the job. We need the goals just to make sure."

Their first on Saturday,

after six minutes, was a gift from Sun Jihai. Micah Hyde had performed valiant work to get to the byline, but his cross was a trickling effort that could have been dealt with easily by Kevin Miller, the Palace goalkeeper. Unfortunately, in the words of Steve Coppell, the Palace manager, there was a "communications breakdown". The goalkeeper called, but the Chinese defender swished at the ball and helped it into the net while Miller stood baffled.

At least Palace, with little to play for but pride, did not tie down, playing with three forwards to trouble the Watford defence. That always had the

promotion-chasers on edge. Taylor said, and confirmed his opinion that Coppell's young side is one of potential.

A goal from Tommy Moon, after 53 minutes, still did not settle the nerves, particularly when Palace, after 87 minutes, managed a meaningful cross that Morrison flicked on and McKenzie headed into the net.

Nevertheless, Watford won through. Three games left and all must be won if they are to reach the target of 79 points set by Taylor. "We would be desperately unlucky not to be in the play-offs with a total like that," he said. "It is up to us now, nobody else."

WATFORD (4-4-2): A. Chamberlain — D. Bell, R. Taylor, S. Palmer, P. Robinson — T. Taylor, J. Morrison, M. Hyde, J. Wright (sub: T. Smith, 75 min) — T. Moon, G. Whalley (sub: M. Nichols, 45).
CRYSTAL PALACE (3-5-2): K. Miller — G. Perry (sub: A. Francis, 6), D. Woodley, H. Mullins — Sun Jihai (sub: M. Galloway, 45), S. C. Foster, D. Austin — L. McKenzie, C. Robinson. Referee: E. Lomas.

Bristol rage over life's injustices

Bristol City 1
Birmingham City 2

By NICK SZCZEPANIK

IT IS an unquestioned part of football lore that when you are struggling, nothing goes in your favour. Followers of Bristol City would concur with that after a game in which all the significant decisions — a disallowed goal, a penalty refused and a penalty awarded — went against their team. To that can be added a poor back-pass that led to the deciding goal as the home side, desperate for points in their quest to escape relegation, were instead firmly consigned to the bottom of the table.

In a first half described by Trevor Francis, the Birmingham manager, as "one of our most uncomfortable of the season," Bristol City dominated but could only get the ball in the net once and then saw Michael Dean, the referee, award a free kick to the visitors for an unspecified offence. Later, Dean turned down strong penalty appeals after Jonathan Bass, of Birmingham, appeared to block a shot on goal by Aaron Brown with his hand.

These frustrations were forgotten a minute after the restart as Ade Akinbiyi ran on to Adam Locke's long pass before sliding the ball in from an improbable angle, but they returned within a minute when

Peter Ndlovu tumbled easily under Taylor's challenge and Martin Grainger put away the penalty. "The Birmingham players didn't even appeal," Bertie Lennartsson, the Bristol City manager, said.

It got worse, of course. Twenty minutes from time, David Howells, Bristol's backpasser and Ndlovu, by now as unpopular as the referee, was on to it to steer in the winner.

The visitors came off under a rain of jeers and, it emerged, a phlegm and a steward had to be restrained by colleagues after an exchange of views with Francis, who had had a lapse of memory by the time of the after-match deliberations. "I don't think anything happened there," Francis said. "I

was just concerned about the protection of my players."

While Birmingham's victory, together with yesterday's result from Molineux, secures their place in the Nationwide League first division play-offs, Bristol City now face a game of enormous importance away to Crewe Alexandra tomorrow evening and will be without two players away on international duty. "We have to win the last three games," Lennartsson said.

BRISTOL CITY (4-4-2): B. Anderson — L. Carey (sub: M. Seal, 88 min), V. Sebok, S. Taylor, J. Brown — A. Locke, D. Howells, T. Doherty (sub: G. Goodridge, 72), A. Brown (sub: C. Grant, 78) — A. Akinbiyi, S. Torpey.
BIRMINGHAM CITY (4-4-2): K. Poole — B. Bass, G. Rowlett, D. Holdstock, M. Johnson — S. Robinson (sub: J. McCarthy, 58), G. Hyde, B. Hughes, M. Gutter — I. Barclay (sub: P. Furlong, 63), P. Ndlovu. Referee: M. Dean.

Graydon's side scored. Andy Rammell found Darren Wrack on the left wing and he, turned, raced into the box, turning the sprawling John Vaughan in the home goal and side-footed home.

"I'll get excited when the time comes — if it comes. Until then, we'll still be working," Graydon said, mobile off but very much switched on.

LINCOLN CITY (3-5-2): J. Vaughan — J. Barrell, S. Holmes, K. Austin — S. Simpson, P. Hogg, J. Brown — A. Locke, D. Howells, T. Doherty (sub: G. Goodridge, 72), A. Brown (sub: C. Grant, 78) — A. Akinbiyi, S. Torpey.
WALSALL (4-4-2): J. Walker — M. Gadsby, I. Popper (sub: R. Green, 88), A. Vaneash, N. Poulton — D. Wicks, D. Keates, M. Henry, B. Lumsden (sub: D. Meehan, 88) — R. Green (sub: S. Eyles, 88), A. Rammell. Referee: K. Hild.

Nerves begin to show

Cambridge United 1
Peterborough United 1

By ANDY STEPHENS

FOR a team regarded as promotion favourites since early this year, Cambridge United are making heavy weather of reclaiming their place in the Nationwide League second division.

Their failure to beat a Peterborough United side reduced to ten men in a derby bristling with endeavour and passion means they have won only two of their past seven games. They still need six points from their remaining four games to be guaranteed playing at a higher level next season and the third division tie is no longer at their mercy.

Not that Roy McFarland, the Cambridge manager, is losing any sleep just yet — even if his frantic demeanour on the touchline on Saturday suggested that he is, at the very least, growing impatient. "We've got a young squad and perhaps they are feeling the tension a little bit," he said afterwards. "We let ourselves down today, but I'm still positive we will be promoted."

Cambridge's biggest league crowd in seven years packed into the Abbey Stadium, but it was the visiting supporters who found their voices first when Giuliano Grazzoli headed home from close range in the seventh minute.

McFarland's men equalised in the 26th minute when Tyler, the Peterborough goalkeeper, was unable to prevent a low, innocuous-looking cross from Butler, to which Paul Wainless got the slightest of touches, squirming under his body. Cambridge dominated from then on, but Tyler, assisted by the woodwork on three occasions, kept them at bay — even after Andy Edwards, the Peterborough captain, was dismissed midway through the second half for tripping the goal-bound Marshall.

CAMBRIDGE UNITED (4-3-3): S. Marshall — S. Duncan, S. Easton, J. Campbell — C. Marshall, M. Butler (sub: D. Preece, 76 min), P. Wainless, A. Russell — J. Taylor (sub: R. Walker, 52), M. Butler, T. Benjamin.
PETERBOROUGH UNITED (4-5-1): M. Tyler — D. Hooper, A. Drury, M. Wicks, A. Edwards — T. Shields, S. Davies, R. Scott, M. Esheridge (sub: D. Boulton, 71), D. Farrell — G. Grazzoli. Referee: P. Danson.

Safety in sight for Welling

Welling United 3
Morecambe 2

By WALTER GAMMIE

SURVIVAL skills that have been honed during their 13 years in the Nationwide Conference were on proud display as Welling United gained only their fourth home victory of the season at Park View Road on Saturday.

Welling travel to Leek Town, their fellow strugglers, tonight and then have a possible grand finale at Cheltenham, the champions. Barrow, three points ahead, with only a trip to Kidderminster to come, are feeling the draught the most keenly.

Welling faltered only when they found themselves with the unexpected luxury of a 3-1 lead after a private performance from Neil Trebble, who produced a challenging assortment of deft touches, crosses and shots.

Hanlon put Welling ahead with a low free kick and although Norman equalised with a powerful header, Welling restored their lead when Ughab headed down a corner by Harle. Ten minutes after half-time, Trebble played a sweet ball for Riviere to steam into the area and supply a cross that was converted by Brown.

A goal pulled back by Heald, a substitute, served to increase Welling's doubts, but they held on in a fractionally finish. No one will bet against them escaping again, especially as Barrow, who are in administration, might go out anyway.

WELLING UNITED (4-3-3): G. Knight — A. Rivers, T. Bennett, L. Wicks, M. Harle — W. Hanlon, J. Ughab, M. Pritchard — S. Brown, 2 Rows, N. Trebble (sub: D. Brown, 88 min).
MORECAMBE (4-4-2): S. McLaughlin — A. Fennema, K. Mayers, D. Hall, K. Taylor — D. Gardner (sub: A. Heald, 78), S. Chatterton, G. Keeling, M. Sharkey, J. Norman, W. Curtis (sub: P. Burns, 80). Referee: N. Parker.

Relegation run-in: Southport: April 28; Grimsby: April 29; Gillingham: May 1; Exeter: May 2; Welling: May 3; Morecambe: May 4; Kidderminster: May 5; Welling: May 6; Cheltenham: May 7; Welling: May 8; Kidderminster: May 9; Welling: May 10; Northwich Victoria: May 11.

MONDAY MATTERS

Great showman's final bow

Even the manner
of announcing
his retirement
was vintage
Big Ron, says
Matt Dickinson

One can only assume that it was for light relief rather than salvation that Nottingham Forest hired Ron Atkinson this season, and even his jokes had lost their sparkle by the end. Now he has announced that he will retire this summer and we will not see his like again, except perhaps in the music halls of Blackpool. His dodgy tan and weak gags would make him a perfect compe and he already has the catchphrase, "Come on down," as he told the Forest supporters.

Big Ron could manage football clubs for fun, but, like anyone who relies too much on laughter to make themselves popular, the fun was increasingly at his expense. It was clear that he had lost his comic timing when he arrived at Forest in January and, swept away by the faint ripple of applause from the terraces, promptly sat down in the Arsenal dugout.

"I knew it was the wrong one when the some guy introduced himself as Dennis Bergkamp," Atkinson quipped, but we were already laughing at, rather than with, him. Forest lost 1-0 and the jokes, like his team, became increasingly laboured.

The announcement of his impending departure from the City Ground was barely more dignified. With his exclusive story sold already to one Sunday tabloid, Atkinson ducked and dived through his obligatory press conference after the 2-0 defeat away to Aston Villa on Saturday, which condemned Forest to the Nationwide League first division. "You'll be the last to know," he said, before taking the money and running.



From player to coach, Atkinson's career spanned 28 years and 11 jobs, taking in some modest success along the way. Photograph: David Jones

thieves were disappointed not to find my place bulging with gold watches and trinkets. Yet Atkinson has hardly been shy when it comes to self-promotion. His autobiography — *A Different Ball Game* — included scandalous and unsubstantiated allegations of drug-taking involving an England international and opinion was divided, although certainly not down the middle, as to whether it was an attempt to rid the game of the scourge of drugs or a quick ruse to sell more copies.

You would have thought that Atkinson would be the last person to spread unfounded rumours, given that he has had to endure his own share regarding financial affairs. Several reports were published in the mid-Eighties that his transfer dealings were being investigated by the Inland Revenue and although he was cleared of all such allegations, it hardly helped to purify his image.

Soon it will be all over and the game will have lost a character whose gregariousness and passion could not spare him from the reality that, at 60, he had lost his touch. "He thought that he could come in, tell a few jokes and everything would be all right," one of his predecessors at Forest said, "but he underestimated how bad the problems were and he overestimated how much he had left in him."

Certainly, Atkinson appeared to have run out of one-liners by yesterday. "If there are any international committees looking for an experienced man, they can always give me a ring," he said, but it was not much of a parting shot.

'I know the champagne and jewellery image has stuck with me'

have rubbed off on his team when they began the 1985 season with nine straight wins and ended up squandering a ten-point lead.

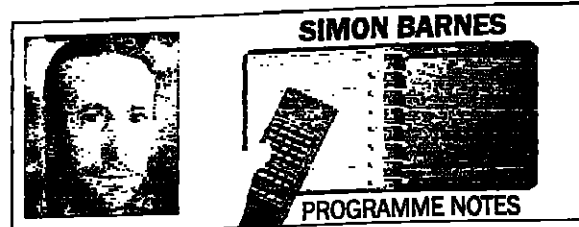
"There was only one factor to blame for me failing to win the title," he insisted, "Liverpool." But the players' drinking culture, which his success

quickly banished, can hardly have helped.

The rest of his career brought occasional triumphs (the Littlewoods Cup with Sheffield Wednesday, the Coca-Cola Cup with Aston Villa) punctuating a series of moves. He lasted 11 months on his return to The Hawthorns, three months at Atlético Madrid and less than a season back at Hillsborough, where his contract was terminated, appropriately, while he was sunning himself on the beach.

"I know the champagne and jewellery image has stuck with me," he said in his confessional yesterday, "but much of it has been perpetuated by people who don't even know me. In fact, when I was burgled the

Crucible containing the whole of sport



SIMON BARNES

PROGRAMME NOTES

It was one of those moments that said it all. Rather a long moment, as it happened. They even put a clock on it. It showed us time ticking away. It was one of those curious, suspended moments in sport in which time doesn't stand still.

It was the time that John Parrott took to play his shot in his match against Chris Small in the snooker world championship at The Crucible. Parrott was faced with a tricky shot during a safety duel with Small (incidentally, it is a strange fact of snooker that the safety exchanges — the nearest that snooker gets to a head-to-head confrontation, the nearest a player gets to making a tackle — are more interesting than the scoring). We had Parrott looking fraught, looking furrowed, looking hag-ridden by doubt, wagging his head, raising his clown's pointed eyebrows and, finally, being a wacky Scouser — surely, somewhere there exists a non-wacky Scouser — grinning ruefully. And it was, of course, rather good television.

The shot took three numbing minutes, 180 tension-racked seconds. The frame took 43 minutes in part of a session that lasted four hours. I thought the only frames that lasted 43 minutes were the ones I was playing in. Anyway, Parrott won in the end, a victory that was put down to experience and character.

All of which was quite interesting. Snooker had its golden age, of course, as it was rising from obscurity to become a major sport and a national obsession. Now it has found its level as a minor major sport — better than being a minor sport, after all — and if the players are no longer household names in most households, the sport still has its place in the national life and still makes intriguing television.

But the snooker boom of the Eighties changed the way that we look at sport. For a start, it gave us the basic polarities of Steve Davis and Jimmy White. Why did White, who had such a colossal gift for the game — "natural talent" was the preferred phrase — never win the world championship? Why did Davis — lacking such obvious gifts — win it every year?

The popular notion — that Davis was "boring" — was an obvious nonsense. Few sportsmen have spoken more interestingly about their sport than Davis. In fact, Davis's talent for analysis was not only helpful for observ-

ers, it was close to the heart of his talent. He had a "natural talent", not for potting balls but for winning snooker matches.

The fact that these two things could be separated came as a revelation to many of us. Snooker told these simple sporting truths with unprecedented vividness.

It was snooker's leisurely pace, the ability of the camera to register faces that did the job. The players' expression of self-disgust and, more revealing, sheer bewilderment as the easy pot rattles in the jaws and escapes, tells the story. Brilliance is the background: one that shows to best advantage the error that changes the destiny of the frame, the match, the championship.

The snooker boom was an education in the vulnerability of the athlete in competition, the fear in the heart of the champion. The long moments of stillness, this being essentially a still game, told us the truth about sport, the blindingly obvious truth that we meet and encounter every sporting day: that games are not won by skill alone.

The annual excitement of the world championship are helped by the stressful nature of the venue. This became not so much a Crucible as a Petri dish, one in which sport performs its hideous and nameless experiments on the human soul.

And always and again that cutaway to the non-player: stuck in his chair like an insect wriggling on a pin. This is always the most interesting aspect of a frame-winning break: not the soothing click and clack of the balls, drawn into their pockets, it seems, by some sort of magnetic flux, but the anguish and self-loathing on the face of the person to whom these terrible things are being done.

We see, time and again, players gnawing their nails, or pulling the most terrible faces with the complete lack of self-consciousness that only total involvement allows. Since television has cleaned up its act — they keep saying Embassy but they don't show us the players savouring the consolation of the sponsor's product — we miss the classic shot of Jimmy White: face pale, hollow, drawn and the inside of his cheeks touching as he raised his cigarette. We understand more about the nature of sport than we did 15 years ago: snooker was our tutor.



Stepping Into The Limelight

By Mel Webb

OVER the years, The Times MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge has come to occupy an important place in the hearts and minds of business golfers everywhere in the British Isles. From the inception of the competition in 1993, the aim of its title sponsors has always been to enhance the season-long experience that only association with the Challenge can bring to its participants.

Everybody likes value for money, and that applies to housewife and company chief executive alike. There are credits to be won by the company golf day organiser who can prove to the boss that his cash is being well spent and, if only on that level, the Challenge would represent something of a bargain.

For their registration fee, companies are involving themselves in an event that last year saw 100,000 corporate golfers playing in it and they will also see their golf day featured in the Monday edition of The Times as part of the newspaper's sworn task of Getting Under the Skin of Sport.



Details of impending Challenge golf days are published in this space every week, together with the results from the previous seven days, plus regular editorial updates of notable feats by individual players. If somebody playing in a Challenge golf day has a hole in one, or produces a remarkable Stableford score, it will appear here.

That is Step One: and that is just the beginning. The leading 25 teams and ties in the 14 areas of the British Isles into which the Challenge is divided move into the regional finals, with all expenses on the day paid Step Two. For the select band of 14 regional winners, an even greater prize awaits in the form of a spot in the national final at the La Manga Club Resort in south-east Spain, again with all expenses paid Step Three.

Step Four holds out the promise of the greatest prize of them all. The winning team over two days of national final competition will not only be crowned as 1999 corporate golf champions of the British Isles but will also have the opportunity of representing their country on a global scale in the World Corporate Golf Challenge final next year.

Teams from 38 countries are competing in this year's world final in May and there is every chance that there will be more in 2000. Just consider it one day this spring, summer or early autumn, one very special company will be holding its golf day somewhere in the British Isles.

One day early next summer, that same company will be taking on the world. Quite a thought, isn't it?

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Registration Form

The Times MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge is open to any company, organisation, partnership, association or body (not golf societies) based in the British Isles, which holds a business company golf day in which 12 or more amateur players take part, of which one player must be an employee of the registering company. To qualify for this year's competition, your company golf day must be played on or before September 13th 1999. Your company golf day should include an individual 18 hole Stableford competition, played off 3/4 handicap or be adjusted accordingly. Players qualifying for the Regional and National Finals must have a current Official Club Handicap.

You can enter via the following:-

1. By Post Complete the form below and send together with the registration fee of £175 plus VAT (IRE250) to the address below, to arrive no later than September 10th 1999. Acknowledgement will be sent within 21 days.

2. By Internet via our event site:



<http://www.timescorp.golf.com>

Please print all details

Company name _____

Name of representative _____

Position _____

Company Address _____

Post Code _____

Telephone No _____

Fax No _____

Will be holding a golf day at: _____

Golf Club Address _____

County _____ on _____ (date)

and will be attended by approximately _____ golfers

If the venue and date of your golf day have yet to be finalised please leave blank and inform us as soon as it is confirmed.

Personalised Newsletter Requirements

Please type or print clearly your company or golf day name (maximum 20 letters) including punctuation, upper and lower cases, to be incorporated in The Times event newsletter for distribution on your day.

Company Name/Golf Day Name _____

Terms and Conditions

I accept the terms and conditions for company registration and enclose a cheque for £205.63 inc. VAT, (IRE250) made payable to The Times MeesPierson CCG

Signed _____ Date _____

If you require any further information please call the event organisers on 0171 405 7273 or 0144 221 2225 (Scotland), or write to The Times MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge, PO Box 4, Harpenden, Hertfordshire AL5 3DL.

Reference No. _____

The competition is approved by the R&A for payment of expenses Rules & Ex. 719/64/99.

FORTHCOMING COMPANY GOLF DAYS

The companies listed have registered their golf day for the 1999 Challenge. The top four individual scores on the day will form the company team eligible to qualify for a regional final

Date	Company Name	Venue	Players
26/04/99	CARVALO MEDICAL GROUP	CANFORD MAGNA	26
27/04/99	EUROPE OIL	MENTHORE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	60
28/04/99	DELTA VACATIONS	CANDLER PARK	28
29/04/99	G.A.P. RECRUITMENT	SWINLEY FOREST	24
30/04/99	NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK PLC		

MONDAY MATTERS

Football's chickens coming home to roost

After the Salt Lake City Olympic corruption, surely nothing could further wound the integrity of sport worldwide? Football is giving it a pretty good try.

A book, *How They Stole The Game*, by the British investigative author, David Yallop, is to be released on the British market today; in it Yallop stirs the pot of Fifa, the governing body of football, under the dictatorship of João Havelange.

But on June 8 last year, when Havelange was succeeded by his lieutenant, Sepp Blatter, as president, accusations that the succession was procured with the help of \$50,000 each for votes from up to 20 African members of the

204-nation governing body were rife.

In his book, Yallop has raised the tempo of these allegations. Indeed, unable to find a publisher brave enough to print the book in English, the writer set up his own company, Poetic Publishing, to put it on the market. And he endorses the front cover of the book with "the book the Fifa president tried to ban".

To the chagrin of Blatter, his attempts to go to law to suppress Yallop's work are helping the sales. A court in Holland ruled that the book did not offend Dutch law, a Swiss judge has placed a temporary injunction on it, and, although the nub of the allegations is protectively coated with words

such as "rumoured" and "alleged", the publication goes ahead this morning.

The hardback is a significant assault on the integrity of Havelange and the way it claims the manipulated Fifa, which the 83-year-old Brazilian "honorary" president has boasted, has an international turnover of \$150 billion.

In Brazil, some eminent sociological and sports writers have exposed the wheeler-dealing of Havelange, and Ricardo Terra Teixeira, his son-in-law, who is a Fifa executive committee member and president of the Brazilian Football Association, Pêlé, in his tenure as Brazil's sports minister, brought out a law to curb the abuses of Teixeira, and Havelange has

Rob Hughes on the publication of a book that alleges corruption at the heart of a world governing body

since repeatedly barred Pêlé from the platform of Fifa.

Havelange has attempted to shrug aside Yallop's book. As he has done with other journalists, myself included, he smears any attempt of analysis and any criticism by scoffing that he defeated an Englishman, Stanley Rous, for the presidency in 1974, and the English have been making insinuations about him ever since. Yet Havelange never felt the need to go to the law to prove himself.

It was the acquiescence of a

feeble Fifa executive committee that allowed the rumours to take root. Then Lennart Johansson, president of the European football union (Uefa), and Mong-Joon Chung, son of the founder of the South Korean company, Hyundai, began to stand up to Havelange. They were unhappy about his habit of granting television contracts, which, for the next two World Cups are \$500 million and 1.5 billion respectively, without approval or discussion by the 24-country executive.

Some of this background is missed in Yallop's book. However, in printing he is braver than some of us who heard rumours, from within Fifa and outside, of bribery in Paris last summer. He may be taking an enormous risk, because none of us knows of any source of proof about what was going on in the Meridien Hotel in Paris on the eve of the vote.

What went on when Blatter defeated Johansson by 111 votes to 80 was clear for all to see and hear. Blatter was asked about "the Qatari bribery people with \$50,000 in envelopes to vote for you". Blatter responded: "The match is over, the players have already gone to the changing-rooms. I will not respond to this question."

He has subsequently, and repeatedly, insisted that where such sums did change hands, they were legitimate payments to countries in need of instant funding. There is a case for this, because almost two years before France '98, Fifa had promised all nations \$1 million from television proceeds. The unanswered question is why these advances had to be paid in cash, and why on the eve of the vote that ensured Blatter standing for "continuity" should be president, while Johansson, offering "transparency, democracy, a new road" should have lost the support that he had been promised.

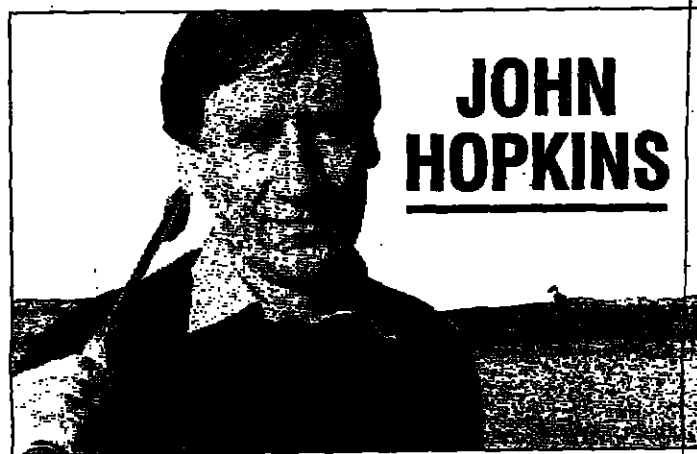
Yesterday, from his home in Sweden, Johansson repeated what he had said on the night

of Blatter's victory and all that he has told Yallop on the matter of the alleged handouts. "I will say nothing about any bribes, because I know of no proof they took place. It would be a bad loser who makes such allegations without evidence," Johansson, however, is "not against" an independent inquiry into Fifa affairs. "I have told the president [Blatter] that we cannot risk what has happened to the Olympic movement. We must be seen to be clean, and if it takes an independent arbiter to look at our books, then we should open the doors. Fifa is not corrupt, it belongs to the world of football."

How They Stole The Game by David Yallop (Poetic Publishing, £16.99).

Leeway on the fairway becomes "a matter of degree" — but Ballesteros should have been penalised

Definition of rules is giving an inch



JOHN HOPKINS

Did you have a good game of golf yesterday? Two down with six to play, yet you won on the 18th green, I understand. And this despite being out-driven and not having played for several weeks, what with having to cut the grass one day, attend your god-daughter's confirmation the next and the heavy rain that fell.

I am sure that there was plenty of banter during your match, because there always is, and I am sure there was not a whiff of cheating. You played the ball as it lay and so did your opponent. You gave him punts of 2ft and less and he did the same to you. He did not walk on your line on the green, you did not cough on his backswing and you beat him. So now you are through to the next round of the club knockout tournament. Bet the drink you had in the clubhouse before driving home tasted good.

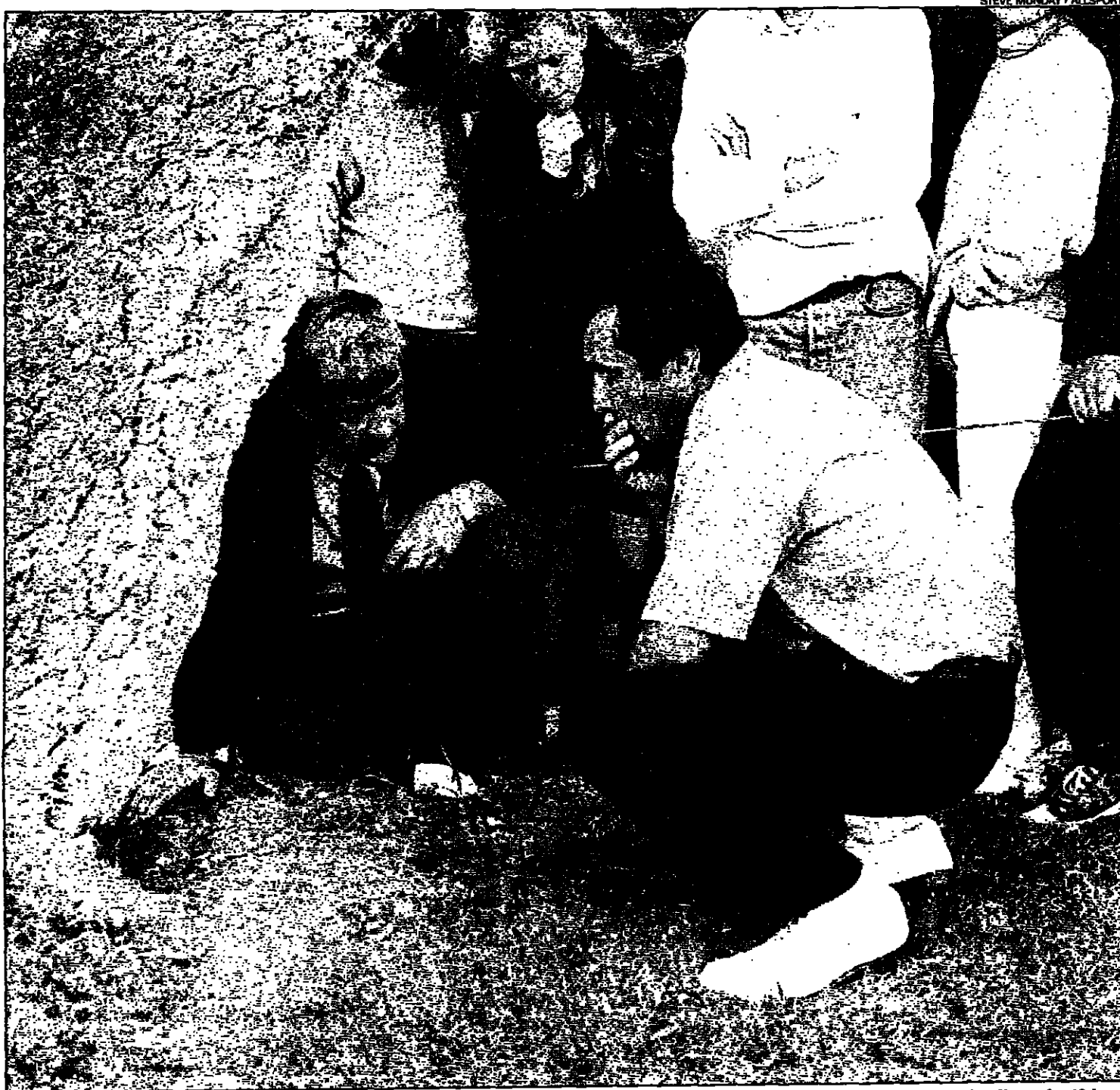
Golf is a game of manners. At matchplay, you wish your opponent good luck on the 1st tee and then abide by a set of complicated rules until the time comes to shake hands with your opponent again, you having beaten him or he having vanquished you. At strokeplay, you ask him his score on each hole, if you have not noticed it yourself, you write it down and at the end you exchange cards, sign them and hand them in as accurate and truthful accounts of your game.

That golf is also a game of trust is one of its strengths. It is a game in

which it is understood that each player is expected to abide by a set of rules that are framed to make the game as fair as possible. Only the player knows that he has not nudged his ball on a patch of longer grass in the rough while his opponent was across the other side of the fairway. Only the player knows that the ball he found in the bush by the side of the 15th green was his ball — and not one of the same make and markings that had been lost by another golfer.

Golfers are, in other words, both poachers and gamekeepers. Golf does not send out umpires with every match to settle any dispute, nor a referee to blow a whistle when he sees an infringement. You did not win your match yesterday because the referee failed to notice a knock-on, or allowed seven minutes of injury time when he should have allowed only two.

And so, miraculously we arrive at El Prat, near Barcelona, where Severiano Ballesteros was in hot water last week with other professionals competing in the Spanish Open that ended yesterday because of an occurrence in the first round on Thursday. Ballesteros, playing from light rough on the 12th hole, hit his ball into the trees that line this fairway. It was later declared lost and he walked the 200 or so yards back down the fairway to play another ball. So far, so good. The trouble began when Spanish television later broadcast film that showed that Ballesteros played his second ball from nearer the hole. The significance is not so much that the ball was not in the same spot as



At Valderrama in 1994, Ballesteros fell foul of John Paramor, the tournament referee, who denied him assistance with his lie at the 18th

that it was both nearer the hole and no longer in line with a tree. On the face of it, this seems to be a clear breach of Rule 20-7 Playing from Wrong Place and Ballesteros should have been penalised two strokes.

The chief referee at this tournament was John Paramor, a very good golfer himself and one of the strongest officials in world golf. He has never been known to waive or bend a rule for anyone, not even Ballesteros when in Spain. Indeed, Paramor has fined Ballesteros for slow play at least once and warned him for slow play at least once.

On another famous occasion at Valderrama in 1994, Paramor denied Ballesteros relief from a tricky position behind a cork tree on the 72nd hole, a ruling that virtually made sure that Ballesteros could not win the tournament. Ballesteros sought relief on the grounds that the place where his ball had ended was amidst some scrapings by a burrowing ani-

mal, a plea that Paramor rejected.

On this occasion, however, Paramor ruled that Ballesteros had not committed any breach of the rules. "I asked the player what he had done and what he was trying to do," Paramor said yesterday. "I realised he had replaced his ball closer to the hole, but it comes down to a matter of degree. Was it significantly better? I adjudged it was not because the tree in question was not one that was concerning him. He said that if he was trying to improve his line, he would not have done what he did because this brought other trees into play."

I suspect I am not alone among amateur golfers in suggesting that most times I could return to precisely the spot from which I played a shot. Paramor said that if Ballesteros had not moved from the spot, then he would have been able to replace his ball precisely, but that Ballesteros, having walked 200

yards down the fairway, searched for his ball for a while and then returned, was entitled to get no closer than seven or eight yards to the precise spot in the rough. Paramor cited Rule 20-2b in support of this decision.

"There has to be some leeway," Paramor said. "Take the rule governing the ball hanging on the edge of the hole on the green. Rule 16-2 says a player has ten seconds for the ball to fall into the hole, but earlier in the rule it says a player is allowed enough time to reach the hole."

As it happened, Paramor had just had to adjudicate on such a situation and he ruled in the player's favour after watching the incident on television and timing the player's walk from the ball to the edge of the hole.

"Golf is not a precise game," Paramor continued. "Supposing a player's ball has gone into a water hazard: he cannot tell precisely where it entered the hazard and so he cannot

place his new ball in exactly the correct position. The key to this is that he has used his best endeavours to do it all correctly. I am happy that the player did this."

Ballesteros is the one who has to live with himself after this episode. He has to look himself in the mirror each morning. "The rule is very clear," Ballesteros said. "I spoke to John Paramor and he is happy. The rest is history."

In this situation, most amateurs would not have known the rules well enough to have done anything but replace the ball accurately and, if they were found not to have done so, would either expect disqualification or would have disqualified themselves.

Is the conclusion of this story that amateurs should learn the rules better? It probably is. But another conclusion might be that there is one rule for amateurs and another one for professionals.

THIS WEEK IN THE TIMES

Tomorrow
Kevin Keegan takes a new-look England football squad to Hungary for an international friendly. Oliver Holt and Matt Dickinson look at the players most likely to grasp an unexpected opportunity.

Wednesday
All roads lead to Wembley for rugby league's Silk Cut Challenge Cup final at the weekend. Christopher Irvine reports on Leeds Rhinos' team plans.

Thursday
Stars of the future — have West Ham United and Coventry City pressed home their advantages to reach the final of The Times FA Youth Cup?

Friday
The Formula One circus roars into Europe for the first time this season. Kevin Eason reports on practice for the San Marino Grand Prix.

Saturday
Opening shots: Christopher Martin-Jenkins makes his entrance as chief cricket correspondent with a look at the state of the English game.

PLUS: Football Saturday, top columnists Danny Baker and Gary Neville, plus reports from the PPP County Championship cricket.

TELEVISION HIGHLIGHTS

The PFA Awards
See the cream of the country's footballers honour one of their number when they hand over the Player of the Year award at a glittering gala night in London. (Today, Sky Sports 1, 6.30pm)

Embassy world championships
Silence is golden at The Crucible as the snooker runs into its second week. Watch out for some new lines in waistcoats, for the Henry Ford era has been overtaken by the vagaries of fashion. (Daily, BBC1 and BBC2, times vary)

International football
Can Kevin Keegan maintain his winning impulses with England's international in Hungary? Scotland travel to Germany for a more glamorous match against the European champions. (Wednesday, England: Sky Sports 2, 7pm; Scotland: Sky Sports 1, 7pm.)

Silk Cut Challenge Cup final
London Broncos enjoy their first day out at Wembley, with Leeds Rhinos providing the opposition in a showdown of North v South. (Saturday, BBC1, 2.20pm.)

Sports letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211. They should include a daytime telephone number.

SPORTS LETTERS

E-mail, including a postal address and daytime telephone number, should be sent to: sport.letters@the-times.co.uk

Run should be for fun

From Mrs G. F. Long

Sir, I agree with Rob Hughes (April 19) about coverage of the London Marathon. I switched on the television about an hour after the start and settled down to watch the parade of people doing something I could never do — and doing it for charity.

What did I get? Learned pronouncements on the "first group", the "second group" etc. I did not wish to see people running for money and I am sure many will agree with me.

Surely the Marathon was started as something that anybody could have a try at. We can watch athletic competition during the many meets that there are nowadays — and I love watching those as well — but I do not want them to be mixed up. Let's get back to the

idea of amateurs doing something healthful and helpful (and delightfully silly sometimes).

Yours sincerely,
GWYNETH LONG,
79, Halstow Crescent,
West Canford Heath,
Poole, Dorset BH17 9BE.

Punish players

From Mr E. Morley

Sir, Why should the millions who do the pools, take part in bets etc suffer because either a player has an angry speller or the referee's decision to send off a player leaves an unequal contest? The only person who should be punished is the player, not the public or team.

What if the yellow card meant an automatic fine from the player's net pay of a percentage of earnings, for example ten per cent, a red card 20 per cent and so on, until persistent offenders were paying 50 per cent or more? Using this system, the only

European Cup final is devalued by yellow card ruling

From Mr Jonathan Lear

Sir, While I am well and truly over the moon that Manchester United won in such a thrilling way against Juventus, I am quite as sick as any parrot can be at the extraordinarily unjust treatment of Keane and Scholes, who will miss the European Cup final.

Even assuming that the yellow cards

both players received for fouls were justified, the real beneficiaries of this action will not be Juventus but Bayern Munich, who will not be obliged to face the first-choice team of Manchester United.

European football's showpiece final is therefore debased. The immediacy of a "sin-bin" sending-off would have been so much more appropriate, providing an

immediacy that would have benefited Juventus and punished the players concerned, while allowing the final to be not in any way reduced in stature.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN LEAR,
The Walnuts,
Paxford, Chipping Campden,
Gloucestershire GL55 6XP.

Final words

From Mr J. S. Hunter

Sir, Rob Hughes's comment regarding "the old enemies" England versus Germany, Manchester United versus Bayern Munich" (April 22) was an unfortunate echo of virtually identical comments made by television pundits.

The cynics amongst us might say that the forthcoming fixture is little more than a contest between well-paid mercenaries, temporarily

resident in Cheshire and Bavaria respectively, to whom national identity is of no consequence. Indeed, many of the players will be neither English nor German.

A recent European Commission document refers to "the rise of ultra-nationalism" as a negative aspect relating to sport in Europe and I would argue that comments such as those made by Rob Hughes et al only foster such sentiments. Instead, I would have hoped that occasions such as the European Cup final — and the

Hotline hitch

From Mr Roddy Finlay

Sir, I have never attended a first-class cricket match, but I decided to take my brother to watch some of the forthcoming World Cup games. After much searching, I finally found the "hotline" telephone number in a magazine.

I have now rung this number 40 times and have always found it engaged. This is not the way to encourage spectators to attend and is extremely frustrating. Maybe I will just stay at home, watch

it on television and listen to the commentators bemoaning the lack of spectators! Yours faithfully,
RODDY FINLAY,
Craigellachie,
The Green, Anstruther.

Ace of clubs?

From Mr Craig Lister

I am the captain of Greenmount Golf Club, near Bury, Lancashire and last Saturday, during our club competition, I achieved a hole-in-one at the 6th hole.

A hole-in-one is an elusive feat at the best of times, but it has been pointed out to me that it may be unique for a club captain to achieve an "ace" in a club competition during his year of office.

I would appreciate it if anyone could advise me just how unique it is. Yours faithfully,
CRAIG N. LISTER,
Bury, Lancashire BL8 1XY.

Weston's century ensures victory

By MICHAEL AUSTIN

EDGBASTON (Warwickshire won toss): Worcestershire Royals (Apts) beat Warwickshire Bears by 117 runs (D/L method)

IT TOOK Philip Weston, the Worcestershire opener, eight painstaking overs to score his first run, but he advanced flamboyantly to a maiden limited-overs hundred yesterday.

Weston, a powerful left-hander, made 125, with 11 fours and six sixes, from 124 balls, shared an opening partnership of 149 in 27 overs with the forthright Pollard and worked Worcestershire into a match-winning position. With Warwickshire wobbling at 27 for two off seven overs in response to 287 for four, rain intervened for an hour, three overs shy of the 30 overs required for a result.

Warwickshire's adjusted target was 231 from 29 overs, a challenge that applied reflected how comprehensively they had been outplayed.

Pollard, released last autumn by Nottinghamshire, marked his competition debut for the Royals with 70 from 33 balls before Solanki eagerly exploited the Warwickshire handicap of bowling with a slippery ball. Their third-wicket partnership was worth 49 in six overs, with Solanki contributing 32 before perishing to the second of two athletic catches by Knight in the deep.

In contrast to Warwickshire's slow start, Knight announced himself for the Bears with a flurry of five boundaries, but he also mistimed a hook to short mid-wicket soon after Smith drove a catch to mid-off. The portents were poor for Warwickshire and when Leatherdale took four wickets in three overs, they were down and almost out.

CRICKET: BRAVE EAGLES BROUGHT DOWN AT THE LAST AFTER LANCASHIRE ALL-ROUNDER'S DEVASTATING ASSAULT

Flintoff plays Essex in brutal style

By PAT GIBSON

CHELMSFORD (Essex won toss): Lancashire Lightning (Apts) beat Essex Eagles by three runs

IF ANY England player is going to capture the public imagination during the forthcoming World Cup it will be Andrew Flintoff, judging by the way that the big Lancashire all-rounder blitzed Essex in his only OGU National League match before reporting for national service next Sunday.

Flintoff, still only 21 but built like a tank, scored 143 off 66 balls, hitting nine sixes and 15 fours with strokes of such awesome power that not only the fielders but also the umpires were often in grave physical peril. Indeed, when Nigel Plews called Ashley Cowan for overstepping, it was probably the first instance of an umpire signalling a no-ball with his head tucked underneath his arm as the ball flashed past him to the boundary.

The subsequent free hit, awarded under the rules of this competition and promptly dispatched the same way, seemed entirely superfluous, since Flintoff was hitting everything with absolute freedom on his way to 50 out of 59 off 24 balls, and 100 out of 148 off 50.

The second of his two sixes off Peter Such cleared the Tom

Pearce Stand and disappeared into the River Can 100 yards away. Another six off Cowan, in the over that contained the no-ball, the free hit and two more balls besides, landed on top of the hospitality tents beyond the long-on boundary.

He also struck two sixes off Paul Grayson, the second — which took him to his century — cannoning off the same stand and endangering a fielder as it rebounded. The other four sixes came off Stuart Law, who did at least have the last word when he had Flintoff stumped heaving towards mid-wicket.

John Crawley, the Lancashire captain, looked on in admiration from the other end, yet he was no slouch himself, making 84 off 108 balls, including eight fours, and sharing in a stand of 179 in 20 overs that lifted Lancashire to a total of 301 for six.

It seemed all too much for Essex, especially when Flintoff quickly showed that he had not finished with them. Yet, amazingly, they were within four runs of victory when their last man, Such, was run out.

Flintoff had broken an opening stand of 70 in 15 overs by having Paul Prichard caught behind for 45 in his second over. He caught Law, when he was threatening retribution with 55, and Ronnie Irani, on

the mid-wicket boundary, and finally returned to remove Stephen Peters and Grayson.

Essex would not give up, however, and Robert Rollins, who had never made more than 38 in a Sunday league match, defied a pulled muscle to make 87 off 51 balls and give them a fighting chance before he holed out to long-on in the gathering gloom.

It had been a gallant attempt to retrieve a lost cause, but the day belonged to Flintoff, who has matured impressively during the winter after looking completely out of his depth in his first two Test matches against South Africa last summer.

By the end of the season his weight had soared to almost 19 stone because of his long-standing back trouble and he was demoted to the A team for the tour of Zimbabwe and South Africa. He did so well, however, that he was added to the World Cup squad after being left off the provisional list.

Since then he has scored a century against England in one of their warm-up matches in Lahore, forced his way into the one-day side in Sharjah and now shown that he is in prime form. The Essex Eagles had been expecting a visit from Lancashire Lightning. They had not expected thunder as well.



Flintoff hits Law for four on his way to a magnificent century at Chelmsford yesterday

Spitfires grounded by Stephenson

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

SOUTHAMPTON (Hampshire won toss): Hampshire Hawks beat Kent Spitfires by 21 runs (D/L method)

JOHN STEPHENSON hit an unbeaten 71 as he and Robin Smith, 26, guided Hampshire Hawks to victory over Kent Spitfires at Southampton yesterday.

Stephenson struck 11 boundaries and faced 82 balls as Hampshire made light of two significant interruptions

for rain. Earlier, Smith had put Hampshire in a strong position by winning the toss and deciding to field first.

Kent struggled to accelerate and finished with a modest 208 for eight from their 45 overs.

Robert Key, their opening batsman, top-scored with 48, but it took him almost 40 overs and he managed only a single boundary. Key was seventh out

and it was only then that Kent started to score freely. Mark Ealham and Matthew Fleming each scored 36.

Alex Morris was Hampshire's most successful bowler, taking three for 59, while Nixon McLean, the West Indies pace bowler, conceded only 26 runs from his nine overs.

Stephenson and Giles White put on 77 in only 19 overs for Hampshire until

Julian Thompson made the first breakthrough for Kent when he had White bowled for 25. Smith then joined Stephenson and Hampshire were moving smoothly to their target when the first break for rain arrived.

The home side were on course for their new target of 156 from 34 overs when rain intervened again. They were then 130 for one, still needing 26 from another six overs but, this time, there was no reprieve for Kent.

Gough hits form at right time

HEADINGLEY (Yorkshire won toss): Yorkshire (Apts) beat Gloucestershire Gladiators by two wickets

DARREN GOUGH helped Yorkshire Phoenix to victory on his last appearance before beginning his World Cup duties for England (Richard Hobson writes). His late contribution denied Gloucestershire Gladiators in the evening gloom before Gary Fellows hit the winning boundary.

Yorkshire were easing towards a modest target of 146 when Craig White followed bowling figures of four for 25 with a score of 49 from 39 balls. However, the slower pace of Alleyne and Averis proved to be more effective than the new-ball attack and the initiative swung.

Earlier, Gloucestershire lost six wickets in 21 balls as White and Sidebottom scythed through the lower order. Dawson bludgeoned 21 from Hamilton's first over, but the dismissal of Windows, when seemingly set, precipitated the collapse.

Progress in dispute over Test grounds

By RICHARD HOBSON

THE lengthy dispute between the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the Test Match Grounds Consortium (TMGC), which is threatening to disrupt the forthcoming series against New Zealand, has moved a step towards a resolution. Negotiators for the TMGC are prepared to reduce their demands this season as part of a longer-term deal.

Later this week, the TMGC, which seeks a greater share of the central budget to pay for maintenance and improvements at the six Test venues, will discuss an ECB offer covering international matches in England until 2002.

Staging agreements for the four Tests against New Zealand remain unsigned little more than two months before the start of the series. It has been suggested that matches might be switched to venues such as Chester-le-Street and Cardiff.

However, one member of the TMGC said yesterday: "Generally, both sides are moving in the right direction and the talks are positive. We are prepared to concede quite a lot of ground for this year for the good of the game on the understanding that it is part of a four-year package."

England will have to wait until next season if they want Bob Woolmer to succeed David Lloyd as the team coach. Woolmer, whose contract with South Africa expires after the World Cup in June, has agreed to work as a commentator for Talk Radio during England's winter tour of South Africa.

He was reluctant, anyway, to use his inside knowledge against what will be his former employers so soon after leaving the post.

Hooper takes his leave

CARL HOOPER, 32, the West Indies batsman and off spinner, has retired from international cricket less than three weeks before the World Cup is due to begin in England. Hooper, who missed the start of the recent Test series by remaining in Ajlunia, where his son was seriously ill, has yet to give his reasons for retirement to the West Indies Cricket Board.

This is another blow to West Indies in their preparations for the World Cup, for it follows the uncertainty over whether Brian Lara, the captain, will be fit to take part because of a persistent and painful wrist injury.

"Carl will be very difficult to replace," Clive Lloyd, the West Indies manager, said, "but his absence will give somebody else a chance to show their talents. It is unfortunate because he has been an excellent player."

Before the news was announced, West Indies went 3-2 down in the one-day series against Australia on Saturday when they were beaten by four wickets in Bridgetown. Barbados. Shane Warne took three for 28 in his ten overs as the West Indies wasted an excellent start — Sherwin Campbell and Ridley Jacobs scored 81 from the first 11 overs — by allowing themselves to be restricted to 249 for five.

A robust innings from Adam Gilchrist, who made 64, got Australia off to a bright start and although the sixth wicket fell with the score at 206, Michael Bevan, with an unbeaten 35, got Australia home with nine balls to spare.

Croft display ignites the Dragons' fire

LORD'S (Glamorgan won toss): Glamorgan Dragons (Apts) beat Middlesex Crusaders by 35 runs

REMARKABLY, this was the first time that Glamorgan have batted in any form of cricket this season. It showed initially as they stumbled to 82 for four on a pitch of no excessive movement, before two intelligently crafted fifties from Adrian Dale and Robert Croft took them to respectability.

Middlesex themselves began badly, but never recovered against tight bowling and

tenacious outcricet. Croft settled into a good rhythm with the ball, but it was the opening pair of Watkin and Parkin who did most to damage the Middlesex cause.

They conceded just 38 runs between them in the first 14 overs and knocked over the top three. This was Parkin's first bowl of the year and he removed Langer when he seemed to surprise him for pace. There was still some hope for Middlesex until Ramprakash was fourth out in the 23rd over. The match ended in near-darkness at 7.45pm.

Stewart struggles for limited-overs form

THE OVAL (Surrey Lions won toss): Northamptonshire Steelbacks (Apts) beat Surrey Lions by four wickets

IF Alec Stewart was looking for an omen to signify a turnaround in his limited-overs fortunes, the sight of Mal Loye spilling a straightforward chance at square leg before he had scored may have given him cause for optimism (Thursy Petropoulos writes).

The reprieve, however, only served to reinforce just how short of form he is. Mostly through singles behind

square on the off side, Stewart struggled for 21 overs in making 27. Caught in two minds, he was dismissed playing on from the full face of the bat, one of four wickets for Tony Penberthy. With Stewart's innings occupying almost half his side's 45 overs, Surrey did well enough to reach 208 for nine.

Mal Loye opened Northamptonshire's innings with a breezy half-century. Penberthy chipped in with an unbeaten 47 and Graeme Swann completed the victory by striking a six over midwicket.

HOVE (Derbyshire won toss): Sussex Sharks (Apts) beat Derbyshire Scorpions by 11 runs (D/L method)

MEMO to the England and Wales Cricket Board: this jazy new National League (second division) still needs some fine-tuning (Mark Baldwin writes). Even the first hint of sunshine on a rain-soaked late spring day failed to attract more than 1,000 hardy souls.

Umer Rashid marked his Sussex one-day debut with a skilful spell on a pitch so slow that Krikken later stood up to

DeFreitas, Dean and Cork. Three Derbyshire free hits produced six extra runs but, with neither an umpiring signal nor any public-address acknowledgement, many in the crowd remained in ignorance.

Cork's combative half-century was trumped by Adams. Montgomerie and subterranean light, but by the time the result was confirmed at 7.30pm, most had gone. A steward constantly obscured the Duckworth-Lewis figure, which was highly relevant, on the scoreboard and both teams, plus umpires, wore dull blue.

YESTERDAY'S CGU NATIONAL LEAGUE SCOREBOARDS

First division

Essex v Lancashire
CHELMSFORD (Essex won toss). Lancashire (Apts) beat Essex by three runs

LANCASHIRE
P C McSwain c Such b Cowan 12
M Chilton c Peters b Law 25
J P Crawley b Grayson 84
N H Farnham c and b Such 0
A Flintoff c Pollard b Law 143
G D Lloyd not out 22
T W A Hogg b Ball 2
Extras (lb 1, lb 5, w 5, nb 2) 13
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 301
10 Austin, G Yates, G Chapple and P J Martin did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-26, 2-66, 3-68, 4-247, 5-284, 6-301
BOWLING: Kent 9-0-47-1, Cowan 9-1-49-1, Iain 7-0-49-0, Law 9-0-56-2, Such 3-0-21-1, Grayson 8-0-74-1

ESSEX
P J Prichard c Hogg b Flintoff 45
S G Law c Flintoff b D M Jones 55
N H Farnham c Crawley b Chilton 26
R C Irani c Flintoff b Chilton 3
A P Grayson b Flintoff 19
T C Walton run out 10
A P Cowan run out 10
M C Ball run out 12
P M Such not out 17
Extras (lb 7, w 8, nb 2) 9
Total (45 overs) 288
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-70, 2-121, 3-137, 4-132, 5-206, 6-225, 7-269, 8-270, 9-298
BOWLING: Austin 9-0-49-0, Iain 9-0-54-0, Chapple 9-0-45-1, Flintoff 9-0-60-3, Chilton 9-0-41-3, Yates 4-0-23-0, Umpriss B Duckson and N T Paves

Hampshire v Kent

SOUTHAMPTON (Hampshire won toss): Hampshire Hawks (Apts) beat Kent Spitfires by 21 runs (D/L method)

KENT
T R Ward c Stephenson b Morns 17
R W T Key run out 48
M J Walker c Smith b Mascarenhas 13
A Symonds bow b Mascarenhas 10
G R Hughes not out 18
M A Edman c Mascarenhas b Morns 38
IS A Marsh b Morns 0
D W Headley not out 14
Extras (lb 6, w 18) 24
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 208
J B Thompson and D A Scott did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-22, 2-41, 3-44, 4-79, 5-143, 6-146, 7-174, 8-208
BOWLING: Morns 9-0-50-3, McLean 9-2-26-0, Mascarenhas 9-0-39-2, Renshaw 8-1-35-1, Stephenson 6-0-17-0, Udal 4-0-23-0

HAMPSHIRE
G W White bow b Thompson 25
J P Stephenson not out 71
R A Smith not out 26
Extras (lb 1, w 5, nb 2) 180
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 280
I A N Aynes, W S Kendall, D A Kenway, A D Mascarenhas, S D Udal, A C Morns, N A M McLean and S J Renshaw did not bat
FALL OF WICKET: 1-77
BOWLING: Headley 8-0-35-0, Thompson 6-0-36-1, Ealham 6-0-24-0, Symonds 6-0-27-0, Fleming 2-0-7-0
Umpriss: J W Lloyds and P Wiley

Warwickshire v Worcestershire

EDGBASTON (Worcestershire won toss): Warwickshire (Apts) beat Worcestershire by 117 runs (D/L method)

WORCESTERSHIRE
P R Pollard c Knight b Small 20
W P C Weston c Brown b Munton 128
G A Hick c Frost b Welch 26
V S Solanki c Knight b Munton 32
G R Hughes not out 10
D A Leatherdale not out 37
Extras (lb 1, w 7, nb 1) 27
Total (4 wickets, 45 overs) 287
H S J Rhodes, S R Lampitt, R K Lingwood, M J Rawnsley and A Shearer did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-143, 2-201, 3-260, 4-276
BOWLING: Giddins 8-1-36-0, Munton 9-0-44-2, Small 6-0-49-1, Smith 5-0-27-0, Welch 8-0-77-1, Gale 9-0-46-0

WARWICKSHIRE
N V Knight c Pollard b Shearer 22
T M R Smith c Rawnsley b Haynes 0
D L Henry c Hick b Leatherdale 10
T J Pinnery c Solanki b Haynes 10
D R Brown c Lingwood b Leatherdale 13
G W Smith c Leatherdale 11
A F Giles c and b Leatherdale 11
T Frost b Lingwood 9
G C Small c Haynes b Lingwood 5
I A Munton not out 6
E S H Giddins bow b Lampitt 1
Extras (lb 3, w 2) 5
Total (21 wickets, 45 overs) 113
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-19, 2-23, 3-48, 4-68, 5-80, 6-80, 7-83, 8-104, 9-111
BOWLING: Shearer 6-0-35-1, Haynes 6-1-25-2, Lampitt 4-0-21-1, Leatherdale 4-0-23-4, Lingwood 2-0-6-2
Umpriss: M J Hams and A A Jones

Yorkshire v Gloucestershire

HEADINGLEY (Yorkshire won toss): Yorkshire (Apts) beat Gloucestershire by two wickets

GLoucestershire
A J Barnes c White b Skewwood 11
R J Dawson b Sidebottom 36
M G N Windward b White 36
M W Alleyne c Bailey b Hamilton 1
J N Strang bow b White 19
H C Russell b White 22
R D B Croft b White 33
R D B Croft b White 33
A D Shaw c Remondish b White 10
S D Thomas b Fraser 8
D A Cooker bow b White 4
S I Smith not out 0
O T Parker b Fraser 16
Extras (lb 5, w 5) 16
Total (28 overs) 146
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-29, 2-61, 3-62, 4-93, 5-134, 6-135, 7-138, 8-144, 9-144
BOWLING: Gough 8-1-18-0, Skewwood 9-1-36-1, Sidebottom 7-2-14-3, Hamilton 7-1-47-1, White 7-1-25-4

YORKSHIRE
G S Bennett b Smith 4
D Evans b Lewis 21
C White bow b Avers 49
M J Langer bow b Avers 27
A McGarrick c Ball b Alleyne 0
G M Hamilton b Avers 0
R J Bailey c Russell b Lewis 8
G M Follows not out 17
G P Gough c Alleyne b Hamilton 15
C E W Saverwood not out 5
Extras (lb 5, w 11, nb 2) 18
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 173
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-11, 2-45, 3-83, 4-84, 5-87, 6-114, 7-114, 8-140
BOWLING: Smith 9-0-46-1, Lewis 9-0-42-2, Avers 9-1-17-3, Alleyne 9-0-16-1, Bennett 8-0-23-1, Croft 6-0-31-1
Umpriss: J H Hampshire and J W Holder

Second division

Middlesex v Glamorgan
LORD'S (Glamorgan won toss): Glamorgan (Apts) beat Middlesex by 35 runs

GLAMORGAN
A W Evans c Nash b Cook 15
M P Maynard c Dutch b Cook 18
A Dale c Hewitt b Cook 57
S P James c Nash b Ball 15
K Newell b Ball 6
R D B Croft b White 33
A D Shaw c Remondish b White 10
S D Thomas b Fraser 8
D A Cooker bow b White 4
S I Smith not out 0
O T Parker b Fraser 16
Extras (lb 5, w 5) 16
Total (28 overs) 146
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-27, 2-40, 3-68, 4-82, 5-162, 6-162, 7-204, 8-208, 9-208
BOWLING: Taylor 8-0-35-2, Malcolm 9-0-37-1, Penberthy 8-0-48-4, Curran 9-0-21-0, Innes 5-0-35-1, Swann 5-0-22-1

MIDDLESEX
P N Weir c Newell b Watson 11
M A Roodhouse c and b Watson 8
J Langer bow b Avers 27
M R Remondish run out 20
O A Shah at Shaw b Cooker 23
D C Nash run out 15
K P Dutch c Newell b Croft 29
J P Hewitt c Maynard b Watson 13
A R C Fraser c Watson b Parson 16
S J Cook not out 11
C J Ball not out 8
Extras (lb 7, w 11) 18
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 173
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-20, 2-23, 3-27, 4-70, 5-80, 6-94, 7-127, 8-137, 9-162
BOWLING: Parson 9-1-28-2, Watson 9-1-30-3, Thomas 9-0-37-0, Dale 5-0-12-0, Croft 8-0-23-1, Cooker 6-0-31-1
Umpriss: R A White and A G T Whitehead

Surrey v Northamptonshire

THE OVAL (Surrey won toss). Northamptonshire (Apts) beat Surrey by four wickets

SURREY
A D Brown c Ripley b Taylor 25
T A J Stewart b Penberthy 27
B C Hollis c Warran b Penberthy 25
G P Thorpe c Warran b Mclennan 44
M A Baister c Hayden b Swann 19
A J Hollock c Ripley b Innes 12
I J Ward not out 5
A D Tudor b Penberthy 13
D C Salisbury b Penberthy 12
M P Bicknell c Sales b Taylor 12
Extras (lb 4, w 4, nb 2) 16
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 207
J E Benjamin did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-37, 2-61, 3-94, 4-127, 5-158, 6-160, 7-164, 8-196, 9-207
BOWLING: Taylor 8-0-35-2, Malcolm 9-0-37-1, Penberthy 8-0-48-4, Curran 9-0-21-0, Innes 5-0-35-1, Swann 5-0-22-1

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
M B Lloyd c Thorpe b B C Hollis 65
M J D Verrill bow b DeFreitas 2
M J Warran c Stewart b A J Hollis 25
D J G Sales c Ripley b Salisbury 47
A L Penberthy not out 47
K J Innes c B C Hollis b Benjamin 13
G P Swann not out 30
Extras (lb 8, w 8, nb 2) 18
Total (8 wickets, 45 overs) 271
10 Ripley, J P Taylor and D E Mclennan did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4, 2-91, 3-95, 4-120, 5-126, 6-151
BOWLING: Bicknell 9-1-42-1, Tudor 6-0-30-1, Benjamin 6-0-30-1, B C Hollis 6-0-34-1, Salisbury 6-0-25-1, A J Hollis 6-0-21-1
Umpriss: G I Burgess and R Palmer

Sussex v Derbyshire

HOVE (Derbyshire won toss). Sussex (Apts) beat Derbyshire by 11 runs (D/L method)

DERBYSHIRE
A S Rollins b Rashid 29
M J Slater c Adams b Kirtley 1
M E Cassar c Edwards b Kirtley 0
P J DeFreitas c Humphries b Rashid 26
R M S Westcott b Rashid 37
S P Richard c Montgomerie b Kirtley 37
D G Cook not out 3
K M Krikken run out 6
G M Roberts not out 3
Extras (lb 1, lb 3, w 3, nb 9) 22
Total (7 wickets, 45 overs) 161
P Alford and K J Dean did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-2, 2-2, 3-56, 4-61, 5-62, 6-155, 7-165
BOWLING: Morns 8-1-36-0, Kirtley 9-1-35-3, Edwards 8-0-32-0, Robinson 9-0-27-0, Rashid 9-3-13-3, Adams 4-0-33-0

SUSSEX
R R Montgomerie not out 61
M J D Verrill bow b DeFreitas 2
C J Adams c Cook 0
R S C Martin-Jenkins c Cook 47
P A Coffey not out 6
Extras (lb 2, w 7, nb 2) 11
Total (3 wickets, 36 overs) 137
R K Rao, U B A Rashid, A D Edwards, RS Humphries, R J Kirtley and M A Robinson did not bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-1, 2-123, 3-126
BOWLING: DeFreitas 9-3-19-1, Dean 2-25-0, Alford 5-0-38-0, Cook 7-0-33-2, Roberts 3-0-11-0, Cassar 2-0-8-0
Umpriss: M J Nathan and G Sharp

Saturday boards, page 38

On
Hants
v
Warwick
1.30pm 3rd May

Switch on to the CGU
National Cricket League, the
new face of one day cricket
supported by one of the
country's leading financial
services companies

CGU
& YOU

Youngsters
hope for bri

army's advance
by experienced p

BY DAVID HANDS

Stimpson, of Leicester, holds off Yates, left, and Smith

By ALASDAIR REID

Murphy, of Harlequins, manages to apply downward pressure to score at Vicarage Road yesterday despite being tackled by Hill, the Saracens flanker. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

BY DAVID HANDS
HOCKEY CORRESPONDENT

BY NICOLAS ANDREWS

BY MARK BALDWIN

playing for the

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- Euro breaks: Nice £59 Athens £79 return
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TERMS AND CONDITIONS 1 Flights are available between May 4 and July 15, 1999 inclusive. 2 Only flights tagged PROMO FARES apply to this offer. If sold out, other flights tagged REG FARE will be offered automatically. 3 All departures in this offer must be from a UK airport. 4 All promotional flights are available on a first-come first-served basis. 5 Be flexible. 6 Weekend flights sell out first, so have alternative dates ready. 7 easyJet is a ticketless airline. Keep a record of your confirmation number for check-in. 8 All flights are non-refundable and non-transferable. 9 Name and/or flight changes are not permitted. 10 To book this offer, readers must be over 18. Full terms and conditions are on the Web site. 11 You will need an international passport for European flights. 12 To access the Web site, readers must have an Internet browser to a version standard of 3.09 Microsoft Explorer or 3.1 Netscape or higher.

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London Luton	Edinburgh	£34
London Luton	Glasgow	£34
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London Luton	Belfast	£34
Scotland/Ireland	London	£34
London Luton/Liverpool	Geneva	£39
London Luton/Liverpool	Amsterdam	£49
London Luton	Zurich	£49
London Luton	Nice	£59
London Luton	Athens	£79

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CHANGING TIMES

Capitalisation, week's change

MLC corp (symbol)	Company	Price (1)	High -	Low %	% -2	MLC corp (symbol)	Company	Price (1)	High -	Low %	% -2
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[illegible][illegible]

172.2	NYC	231	5	86	111	258.80	March	237	+	3	98	30	11	10
172.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.1	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.2	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.3	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.4	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.5	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.7	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.8	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
173.9	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.0	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.1	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.2	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.3	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.4	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.5	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.7	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.8	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
174.9	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.0	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
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175.2	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.3	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.4	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.5	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.7	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.8	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
175.9	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.0	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.1	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.2	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.3	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.4	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.5	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
176.7	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
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176.9	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
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178.4	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
178.5	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
178.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
178.7	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
178.8	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
178.9	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.0	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
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179.3	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.4	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.5	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.6	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.7	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.8	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
179.9	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10
180.0	NYC	230	19	23	127	261.00	North And	230	-	3	98	30	11	10

5.0	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.1	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.2	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.3	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.4	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.5	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.6	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.7	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.8	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
5.9	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.0	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.1	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.2	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.3	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.4	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.5	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.6	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.7	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.8	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
6.9	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.0	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.1	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.2	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.3	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.4	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.5	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.6	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.7	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.8	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
7.9	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
8.0	Albany	97	17	5.6	18.9	2,376.00	Sagin Co	1915	-	10	41.7	84	28	11	10
8.1	Albany	97	17												

[illegible]

20.93	Land Use	82	-	0	31	78	18	215	-12	40	1
20.94	Land & Forest	82	-	0	31	157	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
20.95	Land & Forest	82	-	0	31	157	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.70	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.71	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.72	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.73	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.74	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.75	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.76	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.77	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.78	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.79	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.80	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.81	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.82	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.83	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.84	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.85	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.86	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.87	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.88	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.89	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.90	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.91	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.92	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.93	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.94	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.95	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.96	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.97	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.98	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
15.99	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124
16.00	MEPC	82	-	30	3	229	At Peoples	2,622	At Peoples	34	124

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

15.40	Perforate Pipe	122	14	45	9.8
15.40	16" Galv	171	14	1	9.1
15.40	18" Galv	172	14	1	9.1
36.60	Steel Gates	38	1		
36.60	18" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	24" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	30" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	36" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	42" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	48" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	60" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	90" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	360" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	372" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	390" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	396" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	960" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	1002" Steel Gate	38	1		
36.60	1008" Steel Gate	38	1		
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36.60	1590" Steel Gate	38	1		

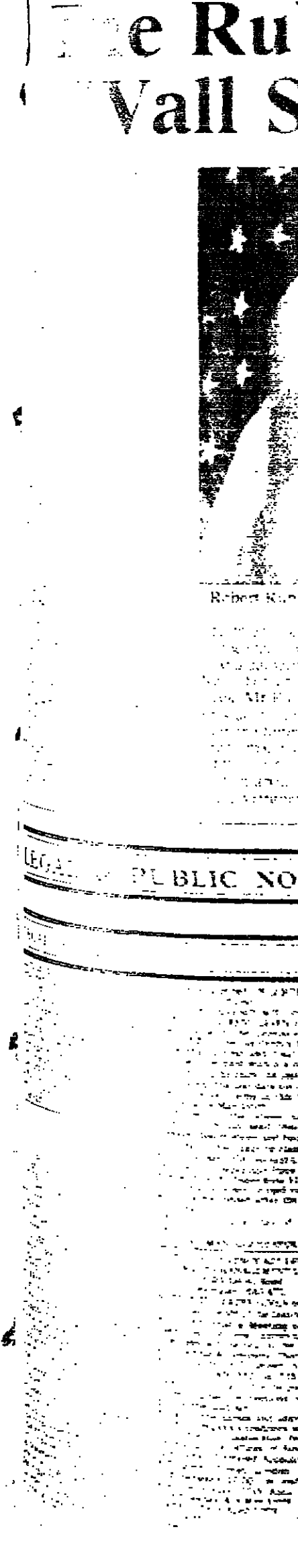
11730 Acen Group
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problem. No significant data. Compared to half the
concentrations of the PISE 100 index.

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MEDJUNS (5 to 15 years)		UNDATED							
9.000	Index 7/4/2002	106-3230	-0.1800	6.80	4.85	75.0000	+0.0000	4.66	
6.567	Index 9/4/2002	114.7000	-0.2400	8.52	4.89	82.6889	+0.2200	4.66	
7.996	Index 9/4/2002	107.7000	-0.1600	6.46	6.21	81.0000	+0.0000	4.66	
8.000	Index 9/4/2002	71.7000	-0.1900	6.00	6.81	81.9100	+0.1600	4.66	
7.506	Index 10/1/2002	119.9700	-0.2400	8.34	1.86				
5.423	Index 11/1/2002-04	122.0000	-0.2400	10.32	5.14				
3.472	Index 9/4/2004	85.4000	-0.1800	3.84	4.47				
4.540	Index 9/4/2004	122.0000	-0.1600	7.74	2.18	Index 8/1/2004-2005	293.4200	-0.5100	2.96
10.363	Index 9/4/2005	122.0000	-0.2000	5.13	4.67	Index 8/1/2004-2004	205.0000	-0.7200	1.80
2.209	Index 12/1/2005-03-05	725.7000	-0.2700	8.01	4.13	Index 8/1/2004-2005	126.0000	-1.0700	1.49
4.842	Index 9/4/2006	124.0000	-0.2000	7.64	4.76	Index 8/1/2004-2005	219.0000	-1.0000	1.62
2.209	Index 12/1/2006-03-06	721.0000	-0.2700	8.01	4.13	Index 8/1/2004-2005	195.0000	-1.5300	1.80
11.700	Index 7/4/2006	119.5000	-0.1700	9.53	4.35	Index 8/1/2004-2005	225.4200	-1.5000	1.71
4.000	Index 9/4/2006	118.1000	-0.1700	6.56	4.75	Index 8/1/2004-2005	217.0000	-1.5000	1.71
3.500	Index 9/4/2006	119.0000	-0.2000	7.70	5.04	Index 8/1/2004-2005	217.0000	-1.0000	1.71
3.150	Index 11/1/2007-02-07	729.6000	-0.3000	8.92	4.64	Index 8/1/2004-2005	187.8700	-2.0000	1.76
1.900	Index 9/4/2007	122.0000	-0.1600	6.78	4.14	Index 8/1/2004-2005	187.8700	-2.0000	1.76

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THE FACTS

Market capitalisation: £5.7 billion.
Annual sales: £2.77 billion.
Pre-tax profits: £218.7 million.
Employees: 21,000.
Business: UK-based retailing group specialising in selling high-technology consumer electronics, personal computers, domestic appliances and photographic and telecoms equipment.

THE BOARD

Sir Stanley Kalms, chairman since 1971, has been responsible for the development of the group from a one-store, family business. He now leaves most of the running of the business to **John Clare**, chief executive. He joined in 1985 as marketing director. He became managing director a year later, group managing director in 1992 and chief executive in 1994.

Mark Souhami, deputy chairman, has been with the group for 29 years. He was appointed managing director of the retail division in 1973 and group managing director from 1988-92. He is also chairman of the British Retail Consortium.

Ian Livingstone, finance director since 1998, was appointed to the board in 1997. Aged 35 and by far the youngest of the Dixons directors, he qualified as a chartered accountant with Arthur Andersen.

David Hamid, who joined in 1986, is the managing director of Dixons group commercial services. He is responsible for Mastercard, the after-sales side of the business.

David Gilbert, the managing director of Currys, joined the company in 1981. He has worked throughout the group as operations director and marketing director.

The non-executive directors are made up of **John Curry**, the executive chairman of Acal, **Sir Tim Chessell**, who is also chairman of the Legal Aid board, and **Karen Cook**, the co-head of UK corporate finance at Schroders, the merchant bank.

DIXONS has already claimed its place on the list of wonder stocks of 1999. By mid-April, its shares had risen nearly 100 per cent in value since the beginning of the year to the dizzy heights of nearly £16.

Of course, it is Freeserve, the free Internet access service Dixons launched late last year, rather than its retail business, that has spurred the share price. Dixons has now asked its bankers, Credit Suisse First Boston, and Cazenove & Co, the brokers, to look into a multibillion pound flotation of Freeserve. They could come up with a valuation of somewhere between £2 billion and £3 billion.

The wind has rather been taken out of the Dixons sails in the past fortnight. Doubts about how to achieve a fair valuation of Freeserve, which is set to break even only this year and to make a small profit next year, plus the stalling of the Wall Street technology stock rally, knocked its share price off its peak. But those who bought at the beginning of the year will still be flush.

If Freeserve were somehow to be split off from Dixons, through a partial sale, flotation or joint venture, it would have the benefit of giving the market a chance to evaluate the core retailing business properly. It is doing well, but the fuss over Freeserve has left it in the shadows.

John Clare, group chief executive, points out that, although there has already been a huge share price spike this year, the group has actually been on a reasonably steady upward curve since 1994. Windfall spending from building society conversions gave a huge boost to sales two years ago, and they subsequently fell back. Since then, trade has gone back on to a smooth upward track.

The turning point for Dixons's fortunes came when it sold its American retailing business in 1993, six years after buying it. Silo, or Your Electronic Superstore, as it was renamed, was a unmitigated disaster for Dixons. Mr Clare remembers it as a "nightmare".

Withdrawing from the States cost Dixons £300 million in all, and a great deal of credibility. Since then, Dixons has not made any overseas acquisitions, except in the Irish Republic. "When we came back from America, we had our tails between our legs and said we'd focus back on the UK. The strategy has delivered," Mr Clare says.

The Freeserve venture is a

CORPORATE PROFILE: Dixons



Sir Stanley Kalms, chairman, left, and John Clare, chief executive, have seen shares in Dixons, the electrical retailer, reach nearly £16 this year, boosted by Freeserve, the free Internet access service that was launched last year. With the growth in Internet stocks, Dixons is now considering floating Freeserve



big step away from the British high streets and retail parks for Dixons. Its success could encourage other such strategic leaps and this could lead to some expansion overseas again. America was a failure, and if Dixons were to try expanding in western Europe, it would quickly come up against Kingfisher, which has a large European electricals business built around Darty, the French market leader, and Comet in the UK.

Dixons and Kingfisher went through a period, ten to fifteen years ago, when their fates were closely intertwined. Dixons made a £1.8 billion bid for Kingfisher in 1986, when it was still named Woolworth Holdings. When that failed, by way of consolation, Dixons bought Silo. Spotting that the acquisition had been a mistake, Kingfisher struck back with a £568 million hostile bid in 1989.

When that bid failed in turn, Kingfisher consolidated itself with the purchase of Darty. Mr Clare says that he would have

loved to have bought Darty, a company that he greatly admires, but Dixons was in no position to do so at the time. Looking at the Dixons position in the UK, there is little doubt that markets are going in its favour. Lots of new hi-tech products are coming on to the market in the next three years, while others will move into the mainstream. Great things are expected of such

things as digital television, mini-discs and DVD. "In the early Eighties there was a technology bandwagon. From the second half of the Eighties there was nothing new. We are now standing at the edge of an era when we will get growth," Mr Clare says. Verdict, the retail consultancy, believes that Dixons, the market leader in the UK, should be a beneficiary of the

explosion in new products, as it has a format to match each growth area. In personal computers it has PC World, in telecommunications it has The Link, in games it has @Jakarta.

Sir Stanley Kalms, whose father founded Dixons with a photographic studio in 1937, is still chairman of the company, and remains as enthusiastic about new developments as ever. Now aged 67, he works out of the Dixons central London office, while Mr Clare runs the group from the Hemel Hempstead headquarters.

When Sir Stanley took Dixons on to the London Stock Exchange in 1962 it was still a photographic business, with 16 branches. It was not until five years later that Japanese audio and hi-fi units appeared in the Dixons range. Expansion continued, and in 1984 the Currys Group was acquired. It added 613 retail outlets to the group, together with Mastercard, the electrical appliance service organisation.

The Dixons conundrum is that it has overcome its American mistake to become phenomenally successful, the stock market loves it to pieces, but the general public does not. Customers flock to Dixons shops, but on the whole have not taken them to their hearts.

Mr Clare acknowledges this, but says that Dixons is doing its best, and has to cope with some formidable difficulties. He admits: "I'd like to establish a reputation and image with the consumer that is better than the one we've got. We're the best regarded in the sector, but not as highly regarded as other sectors."

"The main reason is the products. We sell products that go wrong and that people have difficulty in understanding." Although staff turnover is not bad for the sector, at about 20 per cent per annum, the churn of sales staff can cause problems. As so many of the products sold by Dixons involve servicing at some point, it also sells extended warranties. It is always chary of saying how

much money it makes on these warranties — another factor that has aroused public mistrust.

Customers are also constantly suspicious that Dixons' prices are unfairly high. Despite the company's protestations that it operates on very low margins, Peter Mandelson, when he was Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, drew the Office of Fair Trading's attention to accusations that Dixons was overcharging.

Dixons and the OFT have had one meeting to discuss the issue, and nothing more has been said. There is no inquiry, but nor is there anything to say that the company has been exonerated. Given the Government's enthusiasm for defending the rights of the consumer, there seems a reasonable chance that the competition regulators will eventually turn their full attention to the electricals market, particularly personal computers.

Dixons has certainly built itself a very strong position within its markets. Verdict reckons that it has grown its share of the entire electricals market from 17.3 per cent in 1994 to 27 per cent. The move by Asda and Tesco into electrical retailing has had no noticeable impact, and Mr Clare is confident that neither supermarket operator actually makes money on it. "Electrical retailing is a very easy market in which to secure sales, but it is very difficult to make money," he says.

Integrity Works praised Dixons' "long-established and progressive approach to ethical expression," adding: "Starting at the top and through its sponsorship of a chair in business ethics, it has spelt out that in its view 'good business begins and ends with integrity'."

Crisp Consulting said that Sir Stanley's pay of £850,000 a year is well under par for his long experience, and the other directors are paid reasonably.

SARAH CUNNINGHAM

Ethical Expression	
Financial record	8/10
Share performance	10/10
Attitude to staff	6/10
Strength of brand	10/10
Innovation	7/10
Annual report	8/10
City star rating	7/10
Future prospects	9/10
Total	80/100

Ethical expression is evaluated by Integrity Works. The fairer the score, the better the company's practice scores. Highest score is provided by Crisp Consulting.

Crystal Palace's Goldberg loses £7m as companies are liquidated

By Jason Nisse

MARK GOLDBERG, the 35-year-old computer recruitment entrepreneur who presided over the collapse of Crystal Palace football club, has lost more than £7 million in a series of business ventures that have been placed into liquidation in the past few weeks.

In addition to losing an estimated £22 million when Crystal Palace went into administration last month, Mr Goldberg has suffered huge losses in a series of badly run business ventures.

The losses incurred by Mr Goldberg this year will have more than wiped out the money that he made from selling a 12 per cent stake in MSB International, the recruitment firm that he founded, for £23.8 million last year.

Mr Goldberg is almost certain to sell his remaining million shares in MSB in the next few weeks. MSB shares rose 29p to 220p on Friday, ahead of the company reporting its full-year results tomorrow.

The figures are expected to show MSB thriving without Mr Goldberg — who resigned from the company last July — and reporting profits, before



Mark Goldberg lost £22 million when Crystal Palace football club went into administration

exceptional costs and tax, of £11.5 million. All in all, eight companies controlled by Mr Goldberg have been placed in liquidation over the past seven weeks. These include Data Scanning, a technology start-up venture, Lands Development Corporation, a property company, and

various sports management companies. The liquidators, David Rubin and Partners, estimate that Mr Goldberg has lost £7.3 million in these ventures. The losses of other creditors are estimated at between £1.8 million and £2 million, and the Inland Revenue and Customs and Ex-

cise are believed to have lost about £500,000. Mr Rubin said that it appears that the companies had been "run by remote control". He said that Mr Goldberg had been "astonishingly naive for a businessman". The losses this year do not represent the first time that

Mr Goldberg has been in financial difficulty. In 1991 he presided over the collapse of two ventures — MSB Appointments (London), which was liquidated with a deficit of £873,000, and Aquamarine Hotel (Brighton), which had a deficit of £306,000.

As a result of this, Mr Goldberg faced bankruptcy over debts he had incurred totalling £1.07 million. He agreed an individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA) with his creditors, by which they were paid only £30,000 to clear his debts.

This IVA was disclosed in the prospectus for MSB's flotation, but is not well known. Simon Paterson, of Moore Stephens Booth White, administrator of Crystal Palace, admitted that he was not aware of the IVA when he took on the appointment at the First Division football club, but that he had since been told about it.

He is working on a plan to restructure the club's finances so that it can resume combat in the First Division next season. Mr Goldberg — who last week charged Crystal Palace fans £5 each to attend a public meeting about the club and has hired a bodyguard — was unavailable for comment.

Search for top valuation spurs technology firms to look for US listings

By Chris Ayres

MANY of Britain's fastest-growing technology companies are considering abandoning their homeland to float on the Nasdaq stock market in the US, authoritative research out today shows.

The research, carried out by Deloitte & Touche, the chartered accountants, to find Britain's 50 fastest-growing technology companies, found that many businesses felt they would achieve significantly higher valuations in the US than in London.

Deloitte's findings will once again highlight the relative lack of financial research into the technology sector in Britain, and the reluctance of British investors to embrace high-risk, high-reward ventures.

In spite of this, however, Deloitte found that London markets were slowly becoming more attractive to technology companies, thanks to the increasingly high profile of businesses such as Freeserve, the free Internet access company expected to join the London stock market this summer.

At the top of Deloitte's Fast 50 list is Eidos, the computer games company behind the hit title *Tomb Raider*, which is currently being made into a Hollywood film.

Eidos was founded in 1990 by Simon Streater, a former Ministry of Defence software engineer, and turned into a commercial success by Ian Livingstone, one of the founders of the Games Workshop retail chain, and Charles Cornwall, a South African corporate financier. The company, which is quoted on Nasdaq as well as in London, achieved astonishing sales growth of 29,637 per cent between 1995 and 1997.

In second place is Data Discoveries, an Edinburgh software company, which saw sales grow by 7,117 per cent during the same period. The company produces business software that can confirm the names and addresses of customers.

Behind Data Discoveries is Network Disaster Recovery, an IT company founded only five years ago that helps its clients to guard against their

computer systems being disrupted by fire, flood, sabotage or faults. The company saw sales grow by 3,656 per cent between 1995 and 1997.

William Touche, the lead partner for telecoms, media and technology at Deloitte, said the message from his firm's research was one of "great optimism". However, he said there was still "a significant funding gap at the development stage" for many companies, and that skilled staff shortages and high staff costs were a problem for many fledgling technology companies.

He added that the main stimulants for future growth in the technology industry would include the auction of so-called "third generation" mobile phone licences, which will allow mobile phone users to access the Internet at high speeds.

Another major stimulant will be IT spending in Europe by large corporations, he said, which is forecast to grow by 50 per cent to \$300 billion (£186 billion) by 2002.

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The Sundays: nothing much to Bragg about

You can have too much of a good thing, of course. When the good thing in question is as deeply serious as The Life Peer Formerly Known as Melvyn, that point can arrive surprisingly quickly. Even so, he was an excellent host on The Sundays, Channel 4's Sunday night guide to the following morning's papers.

However plodding some of his presenting may be, Lord Bragg is a deft and astute chairman of group discussions. This was what was needed to juggle a panel of opinionated hacks, writers and comics, such as Francis Wheen, Howard Jacobson or Linda Smith, and the formula worked a treat.

But for the new series he has been replaced by a derailed young Scot called Alan Tyler.

Tyler bounds into the studio like some cocky game show host. His every utterance is injected with SPURIOUS URGENCY. He tries to make everything sound like

EXCITING FUN! He thinks it is his duty to cut across the panelists, usually to SHOUT SOMETHING COMPLETELY STUPID. He puts the "thick" in thick Scottish accent. Heavens preserve us, HE THINKS HE'S THE NEXT CHRIS EVANS!

The panelists blinked gently and tried to carry on as if they weren't being hectoring by the loony in the tube compartment but you could see it was hard going. At the end we learnt of the breaking story that Zoran Djindjic, a Serbian opposition politician, has spoken out against Slobodan Milosevic's conduct in Kosovo. As the last prominent Yugoslav to do this, the journalist Slavko Curuvija, was promptly shot dead, this must have taken courage.

This update was of particular interest to anyone who has been Correspondent Slothless and Mira on BBC2 earlier in the evening, as both Djindjic and Curuvija

featured prominently on this profile of the President of Yugoslavia and his wife.

Documentary makers always take the risk that their work will be overtaken by events. The reporter Phil Rees and the production team must have felt this acutely as the potential lessons of their carefully assembled materials were blown apart by the first cruise missile. What was doubtless intended as a sober warning, became a chastening explanation of why Nato's strategy has gone so awry.

One image stood out — the skulls of Serb warriors decapitated by their Muslim oppressors embedded in niches in a medieval church wall. A deep and violent sense of ancient injustice and unrighted wrongs, bitter grievances ossified into symbols and nurtured over centuries, there has been the fuel of Slobodan Milosevic's rise to power, remorse-

REVIEW



Paul Hoggart

lessly pushed by his wife Mira.

Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Bill and Hillary Clinton, Neil and Christine Hamilton — the pairing of the amoral opportunist and the driven ambitious wife is an archetype. Their schoolmates called Sloba and Mira "Romeo and Juliet", so doilyingly were they devoted to each other, but they turn out to be more like the Macbeths. Both are tormented by private

ghosts. His uncle, father and mother all committed suicide. Her mother betrayed her partisan comrades under Gestapo torture, an offence for which her father, Mira's grandfather, personally shot her.

The most worrying underlying message was that they were fundamentally unstable, ruthless and operating outside the norms of rational, decent behaviour. Her ambition for him is consuming, and she is known to dominate his political will. He is, by this account, a hollow opportunist and together they have spun a spider's web of political and financial corruption.

You could dismiss this as Nato propaganda, except that the witnesses included many important former friends and allies whom the couple have manipulated or betrayed. Above all we were shown that Sloba and Mira have always used external conflict to bolster their position. At a time when their grip might have been weaken-

ing, the cluster bombs have fallen like manna from heaven.

Being relatively new to this job, and working from home, I have spent very little time in the offices of The Times and have never met the Editor, Peter Stothard, the subject of Nick Danziger's profile in The Establishment (Channel 4, Saturday). So I watched with a mixture of rubber-necking fascination and some apprehension in case the programme showed my employer in an unexpectedly bad light.

Filmed across the future over the serialisation of Gitta Sereny's book on the child-murderer Mary Bell, the film might have led the Editor open to some uncomfortable criticisms. In the event I would be surprised if he wasn't rather pleased with a portrait that proved to be respectful and appreciative.

The only dissenting voices came from the mother of Mary Bell's victim ("All this is about money") and the veteran letter writer Captain Kim, who thought the paper had behaved hypocritically ("Shame on you all"). Danziger's technique of running the commentary over black-and-white stills lent an air of gravitas and the programme ended with the satisfaction of a big scoop, obtained by completing a long-running exposé. I enjoy Roger Cook's exposés. There is something about the inevitability of it all, Cook's tone of shocked indignation, the secret films, the "Gotha" denunciations, that border on the comical.

Locks, Stocks, Burglars and Fences (ITV, Friday) was grabagily true to form, with the interfering old agent provocateur setting up, inter alia, a formidable lady burglar and a bent jeweller. Maybe all police work should be conducted like this, with the cost operations being covered by advertising revenue.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (79684)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (41133)
- 9.00am Killy (9530626)
- 9.45am Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook (1) (185907)
- 10.15am The Vanessa Show (1) (4790210)
- 11.00am Weather (1) (5454630)
- 11.05am City Hospital (1) (9601959)
- 11.55am Weather (1) (8441602)
- 12.00am Going for a Song (6734189)
- 12.25pm Just a Minute (1) (3584686)
- 12.55pm The Weather Show (1) (11191084)
- 1.00am Weather (1) (44220)
- 1.30am Regional News: Weather (5853838)
- 1.40am Neighbours (1) (16780133)
- 2.05am Inside (1) (1678591)
- 2.55am Through the Keyhole (1) (2644046)
- 3.25am Children's BBC: Playdays (8074830)
- 3.45am The Builders (4088794)
- 3.55am Wildlife (1) (400)
- 4.00am Badger and Badger (5365978)
- 4.15am Casper (7848171)
- 4.35am 50/50 (7079775)
- 5.00am Newsround (5001572)
- 5.10am Blue Peter (2822171)
- 5.35am Neighbours (1) (171022)
- 6.00am Six O'Clock News: Weather (1) (249)
- 6.30am Regional News Magazine (201)
- 7.00am A Question of Sport Olympic gold medalist Steve Redgrave and Manchester United's Teddy Sheringham join team captains Ally McCoist and John Paton for another round of sporting trivia. Hosted by Sue Barker (1) (7626)
- 7.30am The Zoo Keepers (1) (713)
- 8.00am EastEnders (1) (3046)
- 8.30am Ground Force The team revisit the owner of a wildlife-filled haven (5881)
- 9.00am Nine O'Clock News: Regional News: Weather (1) (7107)
- 9.30am Party Election Broadcast By the Labour Party (1) (346189)
- 9.35am The Vicar of Dibley A falling tree destroys St Barnabas's stained glass window, and Geraldine is put in charge of raising funds to replace it. Comedy, with Dawn French (1) (730404)
- 10.05am Panorama On May 6, Scotland will be invited to elect its first parliament for almost 300 years (1) (920085)



Aidan Quinn is haunted by ghosts from the past (10.45pm)

- 10.45am Haunted (1998) A parapsychologist tells for a woman in a haunted house. Drama, with Aidan Quinn. Directed by Lewis Gilbert (1) (8885881)
- 12.25am Crucible of Terror (1971) Atmospheric thriller about a deranged sculptor who creates lifelike statues by killing his models and casting them in bronze. James Bolam and Mike Rann star. Directed by Ted Hooker (1) (849621)
- 1.55am Weather (726282)
- 2.00am BBC News 24 (2636244)

- 6.30pm-7.00pm Wales Today (1) (201)
- 1.55am-2.00am News (1) (272622)

BBC2

- 7.00am Children's BBC: Breakfast Show: Noddy in Toyland (43591) 7.30am Top Cat (8572201) 7.55am Blue Peter (888794) 8.20am Dastardly and Muttley (8543065) 8.40am Polka Dot Shorts (820804) 8.50am Pingu (302228) 9.00am Daytime On Two: Isabel: Highlights (458713) 9.10am Sportsbeat (9183404) 9.30am Numberline (7919220) 9.45am Storyline (7914775) 10.00am Children's BBC: Teletubbies (38171) 10.30am Daytime On Two: Words and Pictures (3582220) 10.45am Cats' Eyes (3507775) 11.00am Look and Read (468510) 11.20am Top Gear (8815821) 11.40am Landmarks (4589133) 12.05pm History File (3489012) 12.30am Working Lunch (78626)
- 1.00am Children's BBC: Juniper Jungle (38784713)
- 1.10am Snooker: World Championship David Vine and Dougie Donnelly introduce quarter-final action (84855626)
- 6.00am The O Zone Featuring the Backstreet Boys, Welsh band Stereophonics and dance act Basement Jaxx (73382)
- 6.15am The Simpsons Mayor Quimby's nephew is wrongly accused of assault, placing Bart in a difficult situation (1) (915691)
- 6.40am Space 1999 Alpha botanist Sherman is plagued by hallucinations on a seemingly uninhabited planet (1) (151404)



Reporter Kate Humble travels the World Wide Web (7.30pm)

- 7.30am WebWise Interactive travel show, designed to help people to use the Internet (355)
- 7.55am Tales from the Net (1) (172775)
- 8.00am Snooker: World Championship David Vine introduces this evening's session from the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the quarter-finals are under way. Commentary by Clive Everton (729713)
- 10.30am Party Election Broadcast By the Labour Party. With in-vision subtitles (340678)
- 10.35am Newsnight Round-up of the day's events (1) (783539)
- 11.18am Video Nation Shorts from the Balkans (1) (224628)
- 11.20am The Viewing Room New series. Kaye Adams chairs a discussion with eight television addicts (1) (91510)
- 11.55am Weather (604620)
- 12.00am Despatch Box (50640)
- 12.30am BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Changes in Rural Society — Piedmont and Sicily (82331) 1.30am Venice and Antwerp: Forms of Religion (27331) 2.00am Schools: PSHE — Turning Points/Life/School A-Z (26282) 4.00am Languages: Major German Vocabulary (1978) (41212) 4.30am Good Morning (1988) (66824) 4.35am Exception to the Rule (1988) (67195)
- 4.00am Around the World in 80 Days (1988) (3554225) 6.15am The News (1988) (7028059) 6.30am News Days in May (1994) (355161) 10.00am Brubaker (1988) (8517569) 12.10am The Nelson Affair (1979) (1230037) 2.10am Friends (1995) (355517) 3.30am Private Hell 36 (1984) (8437447)
- 12.00am FILMFOUR
- 6.00pm John Huston's War Stories (7307310) 7.40am The Fire (1983) (3137422) 8.20am Come and See (1985) (3137422) 10.35am Welcome to Sarajevo (1997) (807826) 12.15am Two Little Girls and a War (2000) (807826) 12.30am The Deer Hunter (1978) (41212) 3.30am Good Morning, Vietnam (1987) (403331) 5.00am Close
- 12.00am TNT
- 8.00pm The Night of the Ignorant (1984) (311403) 11.30am The Seventh Curse (1984) (84249) 1.45am Savage Messiah (1992) (8204331) 3.30am The Split (1988) (3043178) 5.00am Close
- 8.00pm SKY SPORTS 1
- 7.00am Football Special 9.00am Racing News 9.30am Aerobics 9.30am Oz Style 10.00am Scottish Football 11.00am Power 12.00am Soccer 12.30am Football 1.00am Soccer 1.30am Soccer 1.55am Soccer 2.00am Soccer 2.30am Soccer 3.00am Soccer 3.30am Soccer 4.00am Soccer 4.30am Soccer 5.00am Soccer 5.30am Soccer 6.00am Soccer 6.30am Soccer 7.00am Soccer 7.30am Soccer 8.00am Soccer 8.30am Soccer 9.00am Soccer 9.30am Soccer 10.00am Soccer 10.30am Soccer 11.00am Soccer 11.30am Soccer 12.00am Soccer 12.30am Soccer 1.00am Soccer 1.30am Soccer 1.55am Soccer 2.00am Soccer 2.30am Soccer 3.00am Soccer 3.30am Soccer 4.00am Soccer 4.30am Soccer 5.00am Soccer 5.30am Soccer 6.00am Soccer 6.30am Soccer 7.00am Soccer 7.30am Soccer 8.00am Soccer 8.30am Soccer 9.00am Soccer 9.30am Soccer 10.00am Soccer 10.30am Soccer 11.00am Soccer 11.30am Soccer 12.00am Soccer 12.30am Soccer 1.00am Soccer 1.30am Soccer 1.55am Soccer 2.00am Soccer 2.30am Soccer 3.00am Soccer 3.30am Soccer 4.00am Soccer 4.30am Soccer 5.00am Soccer 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